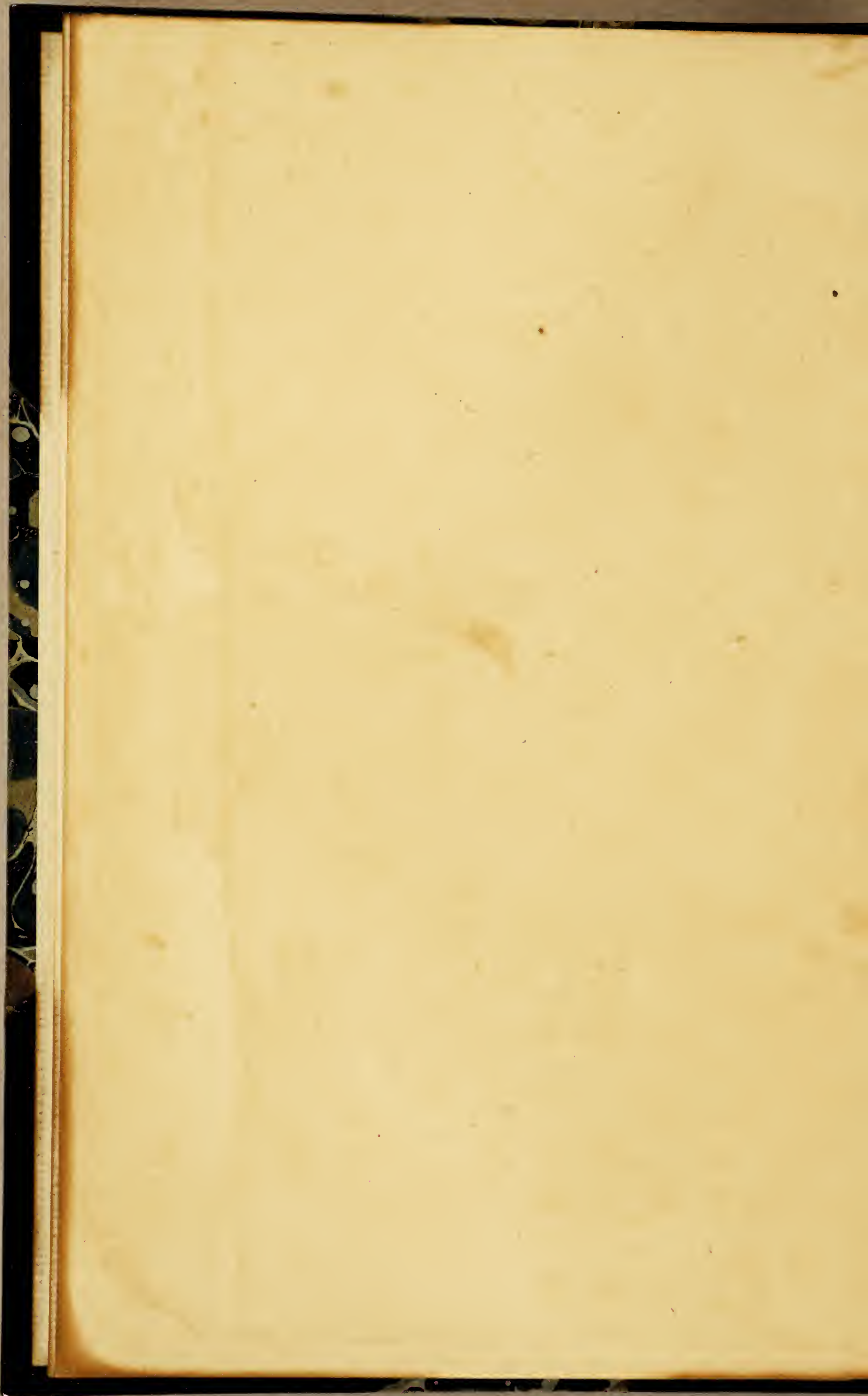




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A

VINDICATION

Of the Power, Obligation and Encouragement of the Unregenerate to attend the Means of Grace.

Against the Exceptions of the

Rev. Mr. SAMUEL HOPKINS,

In the Second Part of his Reply to the Rev. Mr. MILLS; Intituled,

“The true State and Character of the Unregenerate, stripped of all Misrepresentation and Disguise.”

B Y

MOSES HEMMENWAY, A. M.

Pastor of the First CHURCH in WELLS.

“Quisquis hæc legit, ubi pariter certus est, pergat mecum; ubi pariter hæsitat, quærat mecum; ubi errorem suum cognoscit, redeat ad me; ubi meum, revocet me.” August. de Trin. Lib. 1. Cap. 3.

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MDCCCLXXII.

CORRECTIONS.

Pag. 1. l. 11. from bottom for *because* read *that*. p. 17. l. 3. f. *in r. a.* from p. 25 to 29. the running title should have been "The inability of the unregenerate stated and explained." p. 35. l. 2 f. . r. , p. 37. l. 19 f. *equally* r. *legally*. p. 48. l. 9. bot. r. affection of heart to being *in general*. p. 51. l. 4. bot. f. 73 r. 72. p. 61. l. 9. bot. r. *our own* good. p. 117. l. 1. r. as *absolutely* unlawful. l. 11. after "love to God" add *and as expressions of the same*. l. 27. r. *any* external duty. pag. 129. l. last erase these words "He means the whole of our duty in it's full extent." p. 144. l. 16. r. *it is the duty*.

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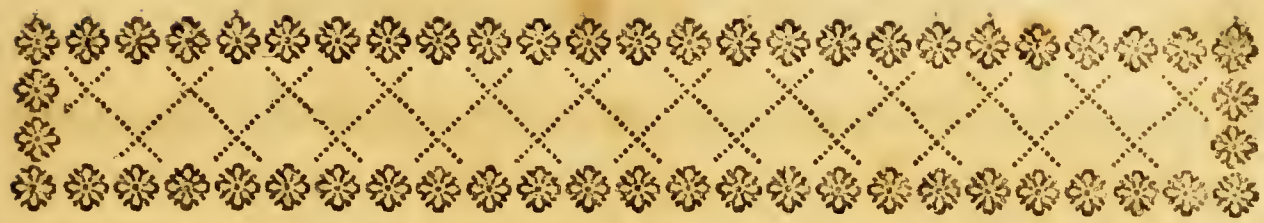
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SECT. I. The State of the question.

✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ THEY who have been conversant with
✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ controversial writings need not be in-
✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ formed what vexatious wrangles are
✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ T ✻✻✻✻✻ often carried on about the true state
✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ and meaning of the question in dis-
✻✻✻✻✻✻✻ pute ; each party confidently charg-
ing the other with maintaining propositions which
they utterly disown. One great cause of which we
have reason to think is because men aim rather to
display their own talent at reasoning, than to instruct
those in meekness who are in opposition to them.
They who have this in view, to run down and tri-
umph over an antagonist at all events, if they find
themselves unable to confute what he has really assert-
ed, must pretend that he holds to something which
they imagine themselves able to confute. But though
the due exercise of charity and a candid fair spirit to-
wards those with whom they may have to do in a
way of disputation, would no doubt much shorten
B their

their work, and disincumber their discourses of abundance of vain jangling ; yet so imperfect are our conceptions, and such is the ambiguity of language, the best medium we have of communicating our ideas, that even intelligent persons, and those mutually well affected, will many times strangely mistake the designed purport of each others expressions.

Had it not been for our distant situation from each other, I would, before I entred the lists of public debate with the Rev. Mr. Hopkins, have tried whether by private conference, or letters, the difference of opinion that appears to be between us might not have been somewhat narrowed and reduced.—But at present I have no other way of entring into his views than by what he has published ; which while I examine with freedom, I hope I shall not transgress the law of charity towards a fellow labourer in the Gospel, or the rules of modesty towards one, who, on other accounts besides superiority of age, is intitled to respectful treatment from the author of the ensuing essay.

The subject now to be discussed having never (that I know of) been controverted among professed Christians till very lately, it will be the more necessary for us to take care that we conceive aright of the question proposed to consideration—And that the state of the question may be truly and plainly represented, it will be necessary for us in the first place to distinguish it from some other questions with which it may inadvertently be confounded.—Let it then be carefully observed.

The question is not whether it be the duty of the unregenerate to obey all and each of the commands of God. The obligation of all mankind to obey the divine law, is on both sides equally acknowledged.

Nor

Nor is it disputed whether there be ordinarily a work of the holy Spirit upon the soul preparatory to regeneration. This we both plead for.

It is also mutually allowed that this preparatory work is ordinarily carried on by means of the outward dispensation of the word, and other divine ordinances.

And that the *Endeavours* of the unregenerate in attending on God's word and ordinances are, by his appointment and blessing, subservient to this preparatory work.

And further, that God has some way given encouragement to the endeavours of the unregenerate in a way of attendance on the means of grace.— This, though perhaps denied by some, with whom at present we concern not ourselves, is expressly granted by Mr. H. I shall now propose that state of the question which Mr. H. has given in the second part of his reply to the Rev. Mr. Mills, p. 116.

‘ The question’ says he ‘ is, whether there are any ‘ commands given to the unregenerate which *do not* ‘ require any thing holy, *but only* require such exercises and doings which they may and do comply with ‘ while they are perfect enemies to true holiness ?’

If Mr. H. had only maintained the negative of the question as above proposed, the difference which seems to be between him and those who maintain that something is enjoined upon and required of sinners in a way of duty previous and preparatory to regeneration, might I conceive be accommodated without much trouble.—For we conceive that there is no inconsistency in supposing that a divine command which requires holiness, and nothing but what is some way included in holiness, does yet require and oblige to the performance of some actions, which taken nakedly in themselves, separate from such circumstances, qualifications and adjuncts as ought to

accompany them, have not the complete essence of holiness.—We conceive that the holiness of an action consists in its entire conformity to the divine law, in itself, its principles, end and manner.—That the law which requires the whole of what is necessary to constitute an action holy, does also require each of those things in particular which are involved and conjoined in every act of holy obedience, although the complete essence of holiness is not found in any of those particulars detached from the rest. There is a great breadth in the divine law, to which every act of true holiness must be some way answerable. Whatever particular is comprehended in the duty required by any divine precept, is therefore matter of duty because contained in the command ; and yet it will not follow, either that whatever is contained in the duty required has (taken by itself) the whole of what is essential to true holiness, or that there is any command which *does not* require any thing holy, but *only* requires unholy acts. In a word, we conceive that it may very consistently be maintained, that though no actions of the unregenerate are so fully conformable to the divine command as that they can be denominated holy in the least degree, being essentially defective in divers respects ; yet some actions are conformable to the divine command in some respects, and are therefore comprehended in the requirement of it.

Whether such conceptions of the commands of God and of the actions of the unregenerate are agreeable to scripture and reason will afterwards be examined. Our present design is not to argue points, but to open the subject of the ensuing enquiry. But it is very manifest that Mr. H—'s aim and design is not so much to prove that there is no command which requires *only* such actions as may be done in

a state of unregeneracy, but that no actions of the unregenerate are required *at all*. If he would admit that they were required *at all* in any divine precept, and that consequently we had any divine warrant to inculcate upon sinners an attendance on the means of grace, as preparatory to regeneration, I would never contend with him, though he should at the same time hold that this is not the whole duty contained in and enjoined upon them by such precept. The question then is not, as he has represented, "whether there are any commands given to the unregenerate which *do not require any thing truly holy, but only require such exercises as have not the nature of true holiness.*" But the question is, *whether any actions which men do or can perform while unregenerate, are required of them in and by any divine command?* This we affirm and Mr. H. denies.

This appears from the whole drift of his reasoning, which is to oppose and confute the notion of unregenerate duties as he calls them; that is, of duties required of men to be performed by them previous to regeneration. And his express words (p. 116.) put this matter out of doubt. For after saying that his opponent has attempted to prove that God does require duties of the unregenerate which they are to do, and do and may perform while in an unregenerate state, and also that he suspected and even concluded that he (Mr. H.) held to no such duties, he adds that *he readily owns the charge*; and proceeds accordingly to produce his arguments.

But to prepare the way for the clearer discussion of the important question above stated, there are some preliminary enquiries which I have proposed to consider by themselves, and which will furnish matter abundantly sufficient for the next Section.

S E C T. II.

An enquiry into the character of the unregenerate, their powers and principles of action, with the nature and quality of those exercises of which they are capable.

THE points proposed to examination in this Section being important, and nearly connected with our main subject, and having been the subjects of great controversies, by means of which, as it often happens in the like case, they have fallen into much confusion and intanglement through the subtilties of vain philosophy, there will be need of careful attention to give a clear and just representation of truth, avoiding erroneous extremes on either hand. I will endeavour to be as plain as the nature of the subjects will allow; though I fear it will be sometimes necessary to enter farther into some abstruse metaphysical disquisitions than is desirable in a theological dissertation. If the reader has not a relish for such speculations, he may relieve himself without much inconvenience by now and then passing over a paragraph or two which may appear dry and barren.

As we are to consider the character of the unregenerate, the first enquiry is, who are intended by the unregenerate? To which the answer is obvious: all those are intended who have never been the subjects of that important change termed by christians, regeneration or being born again: That change whereby men become true christians or saints, as the scriptural phrase is. I shall not here stay to shew the different significations in which this word has been understood by divines. In Scripture it signifies the same as conversion, or a man's being turned, or turning from sin
to

to holiness, as has been well proved by a learned writer of our own. * And if Christian divines had kept to the scriptural sense of the word, without either enlarging or narrowing it, they would, I suppose, have done as they ought to do. However, there is a more limited sense which has obtained with many. Regeneration in this strict sense imports the immediate work of the holy Spirit, creating, infusing or communicating a principle of spiritual life, with a power for holy exercises and acts. It is commonly, if not universally in this latter sense, that the word is to be understood when used by Mr. H. If then the grace of regeneration imports a vital principle with a power for holy acts, then the defect or privation of this, in any man, is that in which the essence of unregeneracy consists. And every one who is a subject thereof is unregenerate.

Unregeneracy, I say, consists strictly in a privation, and not (as some seem to conceive) in principles or habits physically and positively opposite to goodness. For first, there are no positive principles of sinfulness in nature. If there were, they must have a positive cause. They must either be created in and with our nature by God, who must therefore be the proper efficient cause of what is simply and essentially evil, or else they must be the production of some evil being, who is therefore in part the author of our nature ; which is no other than the manichean Heresy. Secondly, though there be positive principles of sinful acts, yet unregeneracy does not consist in them. If we take the word Sin in the concrete sense, then it is true there is something positive in the nature of it, which therefore must flow from some positive cause and principle. But sinfulness metaphysically and abstractly considered is only a defect, and flows only from

* Edwards on Original Sin, part 3, chap. 2.

from a defect in the causes or principles of that act which is sinful. There are not in the nature of man positive principles of foolishness, though there are positive principles of action, which operating without the direction and government of wisdom, are the source of foolish action, or folly in the concrete sense. And the same positive principles of action operating without the influence and government of holy dispositions in creatures subject to the divine law, are the positive causes of sinful actions, which in the concrete sense are sin. It might easily be shewn that sin consists formally and essentially in defect or privation contrary to the divine law : that it flows from privative and deficient and not from positive and efficient causes : And that this is agreeable to the judgment of the most learned divines, who have most zealously maintained the doctrine of man's natural depravity in consequence of the original lapse.* Regeneration, which is the removal of unregeneracy, does not destroy any positive principles in our nature, but it is the infusion or superaddition of what was wanting to its moral integrity and perfection. Unregeneracy then does not lie in any positive principles of action, nor in any actings of the soul, or in the privation of any exercise, but it consists in the privation of spiritual life and power for holy action. It is blindness in the mind, want of taste for spiritual beauty, impotency and indisposition in the will to chuse and perform acts of obedience in a holy spiritual manner.

But

* Vid. Amel. De Conf. p. 143. Twiss Vind. Grat. lib. 2 p. 27. Norton's Orthod. Evang. p. 63. Mastricht. p. 443. Alting. loc. commun. p. 58. Turret. Instit. vol 1 p. 651. Goodwin's works, vol. 3. p. 322. Edwards on Original Sin, p. 317. &c.

But it is necessary to be observed, that since unregeneracy consists in the privation of that rectitude and moral perfection of nature in which man was at first created, and which by the divine law he was bound to maintain, it is therefore to be accounted not merely an unhappy but a faulty defect, which does not excuse a sinner from guilt in transgressing the laws of God, notwithstanding his impotency and indisposition to exercises and acts of true holiness.— Which observation is of importance to be remembered, that sinners may not exculpate themselves while living in disobedience to God, by perverting the doctrine of man's natural inability with respect to acts of holy obedience, and that the calumny which some have had the forehead to cast upon all who dare call in question their novel opinions concerning the powers and actions of the unregenerate, who have without any just foundation been charged with justifying sinners in their impenitency and disobedience to God, may be obviated.

But in order to our having right apprehensions of the state of the unregenerate, with the nature and quality of their actions, we must enquire more distinctly into these things : Which is the more necessary to be done, because Mr. H. in his section on the character of the unregenerate, has discoursed in too loose and declamatory a manner, and not with distinctness of method, precision of expression, and clearness of evidence, which are necessary to give a proper view of the subject. In the multitude of synonymous expressions, which he has so profusely heaped together to set forth the depravity of the unregenerate, though there are sundry just observations, yet many expressions are by no means exact. Things which ought to be carefully and clearly distinguished, are often so confounded and lumped together, as tends
C exceedingly

exceedingly to darken and perplex the subject, instead of opening and illustrating it. Yea several propositions are advanced, inconsistent with truth and sound doctrine ; which so far as they fall in our way, and tend to obstruct our progress, will in the proper place be animadverted upon.

The principal point here to be enquired into, is that impotency to the performance of duty which is implied in unregeneracy. For the opening of which, three things will be distinctly considered.

I. The nature and degree of this impotency.

II. The powers and assistances for action, which the unregenerate may be the subjects of.

III. The nature and quality of those actions which with these powers and assistances they may perform.

The first enquiry we will divide into three branches, viz. What kind of impotency is that which is implied in unregeneracy.—And as impotency or power implies a relation to acts, we will declare what kind of acts they are, for which the unregenerate want power—Then the degree of this impotency will be considered.

I. Concerning that kind of impotency the unregenerate are supposed to be under, there has been much enquiry. Many who have had occasion to make frequent mention of it seem to have been much at a loss how to state the matter clearly, or how to conceive of it. This difficulty has been greatly increased by means of the remarkable ambiguity attending almost every notable word and phrase, commonly occurring in discourses on this subject ; which ambiguity often lies so deep as not to be readily observed.

To remedy this inconvenience, the distinction of natural and moral impotency has been introduced, and is at this day much in vogue with many among
us,

us, ever since an eminent writer of our own, * in his elaborate treatise on the human will, some few years ago published, has made great use of this distinction. As it may serve to throw some light upon the subject of our present enquiry, I will endeavour to state this famous distinction, as I find it laid down by those who have made use of it, and then make some observations upon it.

It seems to be a plain dictate of common sense, as well as of divine revelation, that there is some kind of inability with respect to certain actions, which is a good excuse for not doing them. And on the other hand it is evident from scripture, and seems to be a point generally acknowledged among Christians, that men may be in some sense unable to do certain actions, which notwithstanding they are bound in duty to do, and are inexcusable for not doing. Here are we see two kinds of inability, the distinction between which ought to be marked as strongly and plainly as possible. The former kind is meant by *natural*, the latter by *moral inability*.

But unless we understand the real difference between those things which are distinguished by different names, our knowing that one is called by this name, and the other by that, shews us only their nominal difference. Our conceptions of things are not at all enlarged and improved, any more than by our knowing the latin or greek names of them. We must then consider what is the real difference between the ideas, distinguished by the terms natural and moral inability. If this difference is clearly opened, and expressed in words of plain and determinate signification, we have then what we wanted; but if the explication is given in terms as unfixed in their

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meaning,

* Rev. Mr. Jonathan Edwards, late President of New Jersey College.

meaning, or as hard to be understood as what was to be explained is in itself, we are then as far from understanding the matter as before.

Let us then attend to the definition of natural and moral impotency. The first is defined to be "an inability to do a thing, because what is most commonly called nature does not allow of it, or because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will, either in the faculty of understanding, constitution of body, or external objects."

"Moral inability" we are told "consists not in any of these things, but in the opposition or want of inclination."*

If this were a clear and exact representation of the difference between that kind of impotency which is an excuse for not doing an action, and that kind which is no excuse, our present enquiry might easily be answered. For we allow that the unregenerate are not held excusable in their disobedience to the divine law, though unable in some sense to yield that obedience which is required of them. But if I may (premising due respect to the superior character of the author above mentioned) declare my mind freely, I must say that this representation of the matter is to me neither plain nor sufficient, and introduces a language and manner of speaking so dissonant from, and contradictory to the language of the sacred scriptures, and the almost universal stile of sound divines, that I cannot be pleased with it.

The real difference between that inability which excuses from acting, and that which does not, is not clearly expressed, either by the terms natural and moral, which are as vague in their signification as almost any words in language, or by the definitions which are given of natural and moral inability. It will

* Edwards on the Will, p. 24.

will not be easy to find two sentences of equal length, containing more dark and ambiguous terms than the above definitions. When we are told that "*natural impotency is an inability to do a thing, because what is most commonly called nature, does not allow it ;*" this surely does not make the matter a jot the plainer. I am utterly at a loss what is commonly called nature; a word which is observed to bear about a dozen different significations.* It is added, "*or because of some impeding defect or obstacle that is extrinsic to the will.*" Before we can understand what is here intended, there are two doubts of no small difficulty to be resolved. First, what is meant by the will? Sometimes it means *the power of willing*, sometimes the *act of willingness*, sometimes the object or thing willed. Now which of the two former senses of the word is here meant, or whether both, is not I confess clear to me.—If by the will, is here meant *actual willingness*, then the impotency of the unregenerate, with respect to holy acts, must be concluded to be *natural* and *excusable* according to this definition, for it is certain that it is extrinsic and antecedent to all *exercises and acts* of the will; which conclusion is doubtless very unsound. If by the will is here meant the *power of willing*, then in case a man intoxicates himself with strong drink, to that degree as to disorder his understanding, and introduce an impeding defect or obstacle to the regular exercise of that faculty, his impotency to sober and rational acts, is according to this definition natural and excusable, since his incapacity is because of a defect or disorder he has brought upon his understanding. But this surely is not so evidently true. And further, it is not necessary that the defects or obstacles to action should be extrinsic to the *power of willing*,
in

* See Boyle's Enquiry into the Notion of Nature, p. 27, &c.

in order to a creature's being excusable for not acting. There is a *defect of power to will an action*, which is a good reason for not doing it. And there is also a *defect of power to will*, which is no good excuse. But secondly, We can never understand by this definition wherein consists natural inability, or whether those impeding defects or obstacles which render an action impossible be a good excuse for not doing it, unless we are able to determine whether these obstacles or defects belong to the understanding or will or bodily constitution. And I guess these are not such easy and plain points, that it is fit people should wait till they are clearly determined by the philosophers, before they should be able to determine whether their impotency excuses them or not. Some who have been no mean philosophers, have thought that no real and natural distinction could be made between the faculties, habits, acts and objects of the understanding and will ; which though it may be thought a wild notion by those who have always been used to think in a different track, yet for my own part I am scarce able to shew that it is any ways absurd, or unphilosophical. * And however this may be,

* The faculties of the mind have been commonly distinguished by modern divines and philosophers into the understanding, the will, and the affections. Others comprehend the affections in the will ; among whom is the Rev. Author above mentioned.—The object of the understanding is truth, the object of the will and affections is good: The mind by the understanding perceives, judges, reasons, knows, assents ; by the affections loves, rejoices, hates, grieves, &c.—by the will chuses, refuses, exerts, forbears, and the like. These objects and acts of the mind at first may seem to be of a different nature ; but this may perhaps be owing to our viewing the same object, as it were in a different attitude and light.—Thus Good, which is the object of the affections, is knowable, so is an object of the understanding. It may

be, it is not surely fit that a distinction of so much importance as this, between that inability which excuses and that which does not, should turn upon so nice and abstruse a point, as whether the defect or obstacle lies in the understanding or the will.

The

may be both known and loved. Yea to know and to love good, seems to be the same thing. What is love, but the perception of goodness, or loveliness? Perception is referred to the understanding, and affection to the will. But is there any more real difference between perceiving beauty and loving it, than there is between attraction and gravitation? It will be said, there is a twofold perception of objects, viz. *Sub ratione veri*, & *sub ratione boni*: The former is referred to the intellect, the latter to the heart or will. But it may well be enquired, whether there be any object of perception in nature, or any perception or idea in the mind, which does not involve both those respects? And whether perception, and taste, do not universally, essentially and necessarily imply each other, their difference being rather nominal than real? Whether there be any taste without perception, or any perception without taste? And consequently, whether the understanding and heart, do not really contain each other, and their acts coincide? I have sometimes thought that the promiscuous use of the words, mind, understanding, heart, knowledge, love, observable in the inspired books, was very agreeable to this supposition, and gave some countenance to it. And yet the common distinction of the faculties of the mind may conveniently enough be retained, for method's sake, provided we take care not to be led into mistake by it. If what has been above suggested should be found agreeable to truth, will not such curious questions about which some have made so much ado, viz. Whether the heart be renewed by the illumination of the understanding, or the understanding enlightened by the renovation of the heart, and the like, dissolve into smoke and vanity, and all disputes about the priority and causality of the one to the other may perhaps be found to proceed on a mistaken hypothesis.— However this may be, it seems scarce worth while for Christians to spend their time, and much less fall into uncharitable contentions, in weaving, and in sweeping away the fine spun cobwebs of each other. Surely the fates of Greece depend not upon these things.

The definition of moral inability is equally dark and indeterminate. "Moral inability" we are told, "consists not in any of those things before mentioned, but either in the want of inclination, or the strength of a contrary inclination ; or the want of sufficient motives in view to induce and excite the act of the will, or the strength of apparent motives to the contrary ; or both these may be resolved into one, and it may be said in one word, that moral inability consists in the opposition or want of inclination." Here we may observe that the word *inclination* may either signify an *act of the soul*, or it may signify a *power promptitude and habitual fitness of the soul to incline*, upon the proposal of proper objects, motives and persuasives. The words in which this definition is expressed, as well as those which immediately follow, would persuade one to think that by inclination is here meant *the act of inclining, or preferring*. For this is spoken of as supposing and depending upon motives in the view of the mind. For it is said, "When a person is unable to will or chuse such a thing through a defect of motives, or prevalence of contrary motives, it is the same thing as his being unable through the want of an inclination, or the prevalence of a contrary inclination, in such circumstances, and under such views." And yet I can hardly think that the want of *actual inclination*, or *the want of motives in the view of the mind*, is all that this learned author intends by moral inability. For then we must conclude that the inability of the unregenerate, with respect to exercises of holy obedience, consists merely *in the want of acts, or in contrary actings*, (for this is allowed to be merely a moral inability by this author) and consequently the removal of this inability, which is effected in regeneration, is nothing else but producing

producing an *actual inclination* to holiness, by means of motives brought to the view of the mind, and not in creating or infusing any new habit, power, or principle in the mind and heart, and thereby giving an immediate subjective capacity of being so influenced and wrought upon by motives, as to take a new actual inclination. But this is a conclusion which I cannot think this author would admit. Besides the words power and inability, have relation to acts. And in order of nature, power is necessarily prior to all acts flowing from it ; even as the cause is necessarily prior to the effect. To talk of power or inability, whether natural or moral, in any other sense, is unintelligible jargon. Now this author often speaks of a moral inability to love God and holiness, which he endeavours to prove is no excuse. If then moral inability consists, as we are here told in the *want of an inclination*, then we must conclude that there is an inclination prior to the love of God and holiness, and which bears the relation to it of a power to its act. The want of this inclination is the want of this power. The question is, what is this inclination wherein consists our moral power to love God and holiness, and the want of which is moral inability. Is it an inclination to God and holiness ? No certainly. For this is the very act itself of love. And it is as evidently absurd to suppose an act educed from itself as its power, or the want of power to consist in the want of the act, as it would be to suppose an effect to be its own cause. And to say that moral inability is no excuse for not loving God, is only saying that a man's not loving God is no excuse for not loving him. Which is too ridiculously trifling to deserve to be solemnly debated or even seriously asserted. Is this inclination, the want of which is moral inability, to love God, an inclination (not to God and holiness but) to the love of

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God and holiness? No. For then it will unavoidably follow that we must first have an inclination (that is a love) to the love of holiness, and from thence as from its cause or power the act of love to holiness must flow, which is absurd, and preposterous: Since it is manifest that our loving God, is in order of nature, prior to our inclining to or loving the love of God; and consequently the latter cannot be considered as a power, or the want of it as an inability of any kind whether natural or moral with relation to the former.

If by *inclination* we understand an habitual radical principle or next power and promptitude in the soul, to incline and yield to the influence of motives and moral persuasives whereby a compliance with duty may be inculcated; then I grant that the want of this is that in which I do suppose the inability of the unregenerate, with respect to acts of true holiness, really to consist. But then I observe, first, that I do not find that this is ever called mere moral impotency by any divine or philosopher, before this author.—Secondly, his description of moral inability as consisting in the want of motives, or in contrary motives, is not consistent with the notion of inability here given. For that power which is here supposed to be wanting does not consist in, or depend upon any acts, affections, views, or motives in the mind whatsoever; but is a prior subjective ground of all holy exercises, and of the prevalence and efficacy of motives thereunto. Indeed I am apt to think that the author above mentioned did mean to include this impotency here described, in what he calls moral inability; but to say the truth, he often reasons about moral impotency in so dark (not to say loose) a manner, that one is at a loss to know whether he means by it the want of a power to will, or the want of
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actual willingness. And he often appears to argue as if there were evidently no difference between that inability to duty which consists in the want of actual willingness, and that which consists in the want of a power to will; and concludes that it must clearly follow, that because unwillingness is no excuse for not doing our duty, therefore the want of a principle or next power to be willing, is no excuse: which conclusion, though it be true in the case of the unregenerate, yet will scarce follow from these premises; since in the judgment of common sense the cases are not parallel. Nor is the difference in the nature of things taken away or lessened at all, because both may be comprehended under the common equivocal name of moral inability.

And therefore I add in the second place, that as this distinction of natural and moral inability is not plain and intelligible enough, so it is lame and insufficient for the purpose of giving one a distinct and exact view of the subject to which it is applied. For under the common name of moral inability are signified such different states, as according to the common sense of mankind ought to be carefully distinguished. For instance, who does not see that one who is under the dominion of sin, destitute of any principle of virtue, given up of God to vile affections and hardness of heart, is under a far other kind of impotency to turn from the love and practice of sin to holiness, than a man is said to be under to do any ordinary action of life while he is only unresolved to do it, but at the same time has it in the power of his will to resolve upon and do it, upon the proposal of a good reason or motive, without having any new principles or habits infused to enable him unto it. The difference is great and striking. The inability in the latter case is what is (I think) frequently called moral impotency

by divines and philosophers ; and needs nothing to remove it but what is called moral suasion. But in order to remove the impotency in the former case to actions spiritually good, the sinner must have a new heart created, a new principle or taste communicated to him. And therefore this is much more commonly and properly called a natural impotency, though in a somewhat qualified sense. The confounding these things together has been the occasion of some gross mistakes, as before we have done we shall have occasion to observe.

I add thirdly, that the distinction of natural and moral inability, as understood and improved, of late, introduces a new stile and language into religious discourses, so dissonant and contradictory to the language of scripture, and that which has hitherto been received and used in the church, that I think it ought not to be commended or imitated. The inspired writers assert not only a want of will, but of power to do that which is holy and acceptable to God, in such as are in a state, and under the dominion of sin : that the carnal mind *is not* and *cannot* be subject to the law of God : that the natural man *cannot* receive and know the things of the Spirit of God : that an evil tree *cannot* bring forth good fruit : that no man *can come* to the Son except the Father draw him : that separate from Christ, *we can do nothing*, spiritually good, &c. These phrases, according to their proper signification, express a real inability or want of power, and not merely a want of will. Nor do I remember that the inability of man as in a state of sin to comply with his duty in a holy manner, is ever in scripture expressed or signified by a word importing merely a want of will : or on the contrary, that a mere want of willingness is ever signified by the words and phrases above quoted,
or

or any others of the same force. When our Savior tells the Jews, ye will not come to me that ye might have life, his design herein was not to express their inability in any sense to come to him, but their wilful refusal, and actual rejection of him. In scripture language, *cannot* and *will not*, signify different things; the former a want of power, the latter a want of acts. And they who confound these things together in their discourses, depart at least from the stile of the sacred writings. I readily allow that the inability of the unregenerate is essentially different from that of mere animals with respect to moral actions: yet if we follow the scriptures, or general stile of christian writers, it is more proper to call it a *natural impotency*, than a *moral impotency consisting in a want of will*. Such a departure from the language of the church is inconvenient, and ought not for light reasons to be attempted. It is well known that christian writers, especially since the Pelagian controversy, have constantly asserted that man in a state of sin is unable, as well as unwilling to perform acts of holy obedience; and that it is necessary they be furnished with a power herefor by the grace of God. And how universally the Calvinian divines in particular, (for whom those who hold this modern distinction so sacred would be thought to have some regard) have maintained a *natural* as well as *moral impotency* in fallen man, with respect to the performance of spiritual duties, is well known by those who have been conversant with their writings.

I mean not to make difficulty about words and phrases, provided the things signified by them are clearly and distinctly represented: and I will allow that the impotency here intended may properly be called moral in several respects—as it relates to acts of a moral nature—as it is a moral, or culpable defect—

fect—and as human nature was not originally subject to it, but it was contracted by sin. But to call it *simply moral inability*, as opposed to natural, and then to explain it as consisting merely in the *want of inclination and motives*, is a way of speaking (as I humbly conceive) improper in itself, abhorrent from the custom and stile of the sacred and of christian writers, tending to deceive and mislead the inattentive in their reasonings and conclusions, and has done so in fact in some notorious instances, as will afterwards appear.

I shall therefore endeavour to represent in a somewhat different manner, the nature of that inability here proposed to examination. Only I would forewarn the reader not to expect to have all the darkness dispelled, which such abstruse subjects are more or less involved in, especially in the view of such as have not much attended to them ; which yet should not discourage us from aiming at as clear and distinct apprehensions as may be obtained.

The human soul though immaterial and uncompounded in its substance, is the subject of various powers. By powers is meant both an ability to act, and a capacity of being acted upon. Of these powers some are necessary to constitute man a proper subject of moral government. These are ordinarily distinguished by the name of *Faculties*. There are other powers which though not essential to the being of a moral agent, are yet necessary to his well-being, and to the right exercise of his faculties, in obeying the law of his creation. These are commonly called principles, habits, dispositions, &c.

In respect of its faculties the soul *is indifferently capable* of sin or holiness, of right or wrong action. But when endowed with habits morally good it *is not indifferently disposed* to sin or holiness, but has a fitness and promptitude for right action.—

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The faculties of the soul are sometimes called *the primary powers of moral action*,* every action as such flows from the faculty as its proper physical cause. And as what is called the matter or substance of actions receives its being or is produced by the faculties, they are therefore called the *material principles* of action.

The moral habit or principle is for distinction sometimes called *the secondary power of moral action*;—whereby the soul is capacitated, qualified, and (as it were) biassed not only to act, but also to act in *such a manner*; that is, wisely and virtuously. It is also called *the formal principle of right action*; whence it is that actions are morally good. For that the faculties which are in their own nature indifferently capable of right or wrong exercises, should exert themselves in the manner they ought, amidst the infinitely various ways equally possible, is owing to some cause or reason. Nor is this to be ascribed merely to the objective proposal of opportunities and motives, but to the subjective meetness and disposition of the agent to be wrought upon and influenced by them. Which disposition or meetness does not lie in the natural faculties in themselves considered, since it may be increased, diminished, and even totally lost, while the natural faculties remain the same; but is a perfection superadded to and as it were investing them, and co-operating in all their exercises and operations.

To make this matter, if I can, a little plainer, I will here endeavour to explain more particularly what I mean by habits, as distinguished from the faculties.

The word habit is sometimes used in a narrow sense for a disposition or promptitude to any particular manner of action, which is *acquired by a series of actions*.

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* By moral actions I mean such as are commanded or forbidden by the divine law.

24 The Inability of the Unregenerate,

This is sometimes called custom, which sometimes hangs so heavy a bias upon the mind in its operations, as to induce what is called a *moral necessity or inability* to certain actions. By which is not commonly meant any inclinations which a man has no power to resist or controul, but such as cannot without great difficulty be overcome. These contracted habits much resemble natural propensities in their influence and effects. Hence custom is called a *secondary nature*. It not only strengthens the natural appetites, but will really create new ones which nature never gave us ; as appears in a multitude of obvious instances.

But the word habit has obtained a more general and extensive signification among divines. It is used to express any principle, disposition, or propensity, which is a foundation of mens loving or hating particular objects, or acting in a particular manner. They are accordingly reduced to three classes : natural, called instincts—supernatural or infused, called graces,—and acquired, which have been above described.

It may further be observed, that as there are *propensities and powers* in the mind, *previous to and independent upon all its views and exercises*, which are internal and habitual principles of operation ; so there are other powers, which flow as acts from some prior principle or habit in the mind : which may therefore at the same time be considered as both habits and acts, though in different respects ; even as the same thing, considered in different relations, may be both a cause and an effect ; which is the case of all causes except the first. Thus love is an *act* flowing from a habit in the soul ; and at the same time is itself a *habit or principle* of beneficent action.

The difference between the primary and secondary power of action, or between the faculties and habits of the mind, may be yet better conceived of when illustrated by a familiar instance and example. As

As man has a power of uttering articulate sounds to signify his ideas, he may be said to have the faculty or first power of speaking any particular language. But in order to his being able to speak any language with propriety, he must have skill in it ; and this skill or understanding of language, is a habit or second power superadded to and (in some sort) co-operating with the general faculty of speech. And words considered simply as articulate sounds standing for ideas, are produced by the faculty of speech as their proper physical cause. But it is owing to a man's skill in language that he utters articulate sounds in such a manner as is fit to express ideas according to the propriety of the language. As therefore the faculty of pronouncing words as signs of ideas may be called the material principle, from which the matter of words (if I may so speak) proceeds, so skill in language may be called the formal principle of speech, whence flows the propriety of words, according to the true idiom of a particular language. Thus man as a rational agent is endowed with faculties, primary powers, and material principles for moral action : which yet will never operate in the manner they ought, or in a way of virtuous action, without the concurring influence of a virtuous habit or disposition, as a secondary power and formal principle.

The faculties are essential and inseperable powers of the human soul : particular habits are not essential and inseperable powers. For though it seems to be as impossible to conceive of the human faculties as divested of all habits or dispositions, as it is to conceive of matter divested of all form ; yet as the particular forms of matter are accidental and changeable, so the same may be said of the particular habits of the mind.

A man who has all natural faculties necessary for moral action, without those habits or principles where-

by he is qualified and disposed to exercise them in a holy manner, may be said to have a remote power for holy action ; but when he is furnished and qualified with these principles, he has an immediate or next power, and is capable of being excited thereto by the proposal of occasions, and motives suited to touch these springs of action, and educe from them such exercises and operations.

This may suffice to shew what is intended by the primary and secondary power of moral action.

To apply this to the point in hand, let it be observed, that the inability of the unregenerate with respect to acts of holy obedience, does not consist in the want of any natural faculty necessary for the performance of it, as is on all hands acknowledged. Regeneration, which removes this inability, is not a creation of new natural faculties. How they are defined and distributed by philosophers, whether the common distinction of them into the understanding and the will be founded in nature, how their several operations depend upon each other, I stay not to enquire. This is certain, that mankind are furnished with natural faculties sufficient for the performance of whatever duty is required of them. Their impotency consists in the want of a secondary power, a habit or principle disposing them to holy affections & actions ; the origin of which defect I will endeavour briefly to declare.

Man was originally created upright. His soul was furnished not only with faculties sufficient for whatever duty God required of him, but also with principles and habits enabling and prompting him to obedience. He had a power both to will and to do. There was a foundation in the moral state and frame of his soul for those affections, and that behaviour to which he was bound by the law of his creation. And though

though he was dependent upon God in all his operations, yet it was as really in the power of his own will, as furnished with principles of righteousness, to act righteously, as it was in the power of his will as a natural faculty to act at all. And as he might truly be said to have a power to act, though not independent in its exercise upon God's providential concurrence, so he had a power to act righteously, though not independent on the divine co-operation, as the original source of moral perfection. He needed but to act according to his nature, and exercise those faculties and principles he was endowed with in his creation, in order to maintain his innocence and happiness. Capable he was indeed by reason of the mutability of his finite nature of being deceived and falling into sin, as from fact is sadly evident; but he was not necessitated to it through any defect of natural strength or rectitude. But by voluntarily neglecting to follow nature in its superior principles, and obey the dictates of the divine law written on his heart, he (as it were) cast away that divine perfection and glory of his nature, and blotted out the sacred impression of God's moral image from his heart. The natural faculties with the inferior habits, which in all their exercises and operations ought to be subordinate to that sovereign superior perfective principle of human nature, being thus left to operate alone, human nature became immediately depraved. An amazing revolution took place in the soul of man, consisting in no less than a change of its ultimate and highest end of action; a revolution resembling the change in a political body, revolting from its lawful King, placing an usurping subject in his throne, and transferring to him that love, honour, obedience and tribute, which is due from a subject to his prince.

By this unhappy act the habit or principle of righteousness was lost. No sooner did he quit his hold of this sacred band of union to God (if I may so express it) than he sunk, he fell far out of the reach of it. Or if I may borrow a similitude from philosophy, as soon as he wandred beyond the sphere of divine attraction, his inferior appetites and inclinations, like a repellent force, carried him off instantly, rendering it impossible for him without an immediate interposition of divine power to recover his former station. By the free act of his own will he gave himself up to be governed by his inferior principles; which, though good and useful in their proper place of subordination, are unfit to have the government of the heart. And though God was able if he had pleased to have instantly dethroned the usurper, and recovered again the dominion of the heart; yet as no such favour was due to the rebellious creature, and would have been contrary to the threatning of that law under which man was created, God was pleased, as it were, to pronounce this awful sentence upon him; "Since man has chosen to be unrighteous and corrupt, let him be corrupt and unrighteous. Since he has divested his nature of its perfective ornament, dignity, and glory, it is a meet punishment of his sin that his nature remain divested of it. It is just that he be left in that state of corruption and inability he has chosen, and inherit the consequences."

Thus it appears that this impotency of man in his natural state, is both the natural and penal consequence of his first transgression. *Natural*, as it was in effect the object of his own choice, in turning away from God, to self and the creature as his last end. *Penal*, as God in righteous judgment did not restore that primitive rectitude and power, which by
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being thus slighted and thrown away, was justly forfeited.

It must be added, that the impotency of the unregenerate, with respect to acts of holy obedience, is *sinful as well as penal*; since it consists in the want of those principles and powers, which by the divine law man was required to maintain and exercise. This impotency is therefore a state of inconformity to the divine law; which being at first exactly proportioned to man's moral powers, and forbidding him to incapacitate himself for the performance of his duty; that want of power to do his duty, which by his voluntary fault he has contracted, is such a state as the divine law allows not. It is because man has disabled himself from doing his duty, that we argue the inexcusableness, and sinfulness of his moral inability. *

That Adam should be subject to an habitual inability with respect to his duty, and yet be held bound to the performance of it, is not so hard to conceive. But that this inability and corruption should be propagated to his posterity, and have the same effects and consequences in them, is a point attended with vast difficulty; and is perhaps the Gordian knot in revealed religion. And yet the experience of the world

* If any way could have been supposed, how Adam could have been bereft of that holiness he was created in, without a precedaneous act of sinning as the cause, then indeed we might have said that privation of holiness should not have been reckoned sin either to himself or his posterity in that case. This corruption of nature or want of original righteousness, in such case, would not have been nor could have been accounted a sin, but it comes only to be a sin as it referreth to, and is connected with the guilt of an act of sin that caused that corruption of nature. For that which makes it a sin is not the want of it simply, but as relating to a forfeiture and losing of it by some act those are guilty of who lose it." *Dr. Goodwin on an unregenerate man's guiltiness, p. 16, Fol.*

30 This Inability respects holy Acts.

world in all ages has extorted a general acknowledgment of the depravity of human nature ; and the scriptures plainly assert and constantly suppose it. They represent man in his natural state as destitute of both a will and power for such acts as are spiritually good ; that he is unable to will and do duties in a holy manner, until by supernatural and special grace he is enabled and persuaded thereto ; and yet charge him with sin and guilt for every deviation from that perfection which the divine law requires. Upon the testimony of God in his word, my faith rests satisfied, without pretending to see through those difficulties, which the sacred writers have not, that I remember, once attempted to solve.

What kind of impotency that is which the unregenerate are under, and wherein it consists, has now been declared in general. But for the further opening of this point, it was proposed, in the next place, to consider *what kind of exercises and acts they are for which they want a secondary power*. Now though the general answer be obvious from what has been above declared, viz. that this impotency respects only such actions as are holy or spiritually good ; yet it will be necessary to our conceiving clearly the true import of this assertion, that we understand *what is intended by a holy action*, or in other words, *what is the nature of true holiness*. This then is the point to which we shall now attend : and as it is of great and general importance for christians to have clear and right apprehensions of this matter, I will take the liberty (craving the reader's indulgence) to be a little particular in answering this enquiry ; and the rather because it will appear, before we have done, that misapprehensions here have been one root and occasion of unhappy mistakes in other points.

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The shortest, plainest and fullest definition of holiness in a creature, that at present occurs to me, is this: *Holiness consists in conformity to the preceptive will of God.* This may seem a simple account of what has been a subject of so much painful disquisition; but if it be just, its simplicity it is hoped is no disadvantage.

Sin and holiness are direct opposites. Now sin is most accurately defined, *anomia*, * *the transgression of the law.* Perhaps the word would be rendered more exactly, *inconformity to the law.* Holiness then being directly contrary must consist in conformity to it. I shall not be mistaken by the intelligent reader, as though I meant to assert, that the original and primary obligation of a moral agent to be holy, was founded in the sovereign will and command of God. Holiness is not therefore right and fit merely because God has commanded us to be holy, but he has therefore commanded this because it is right. Indeed the eternal and unchangeable laws of nature, are properly and originally the laws of God. But they are not primarily and originally founded in his sovereign will. The primary and original obligation is founded in and results necessarily from the nature of God, and the relation subsisting between him and the creature. Positive precepts are acts of God's sovereign will. And there is a secondary obligation to those duties which are required in the law of nature, which (obligation) is founded in, and flows from God's sovereign authority, as shall afterwards be shewn. †

But

* 1 John 3, 4.

† It has been said that 'the authority of a law lies wholly in the
'threatning, or appears and is expressed only in that. This
'authority is exercised and expressed in the threatning to the
'disobedient, and cannot possibly be expressed in any thing
'else, or in any other way.' Hopkin's Sermon on Rom. 7. 7.
p. 6. Authority is nothing else but a right to command,
connoting

But however this may be, the will of God is the rule of our duty, and in conformity hereto, holiness, which

connoting an obligation of obedience in the subject commanded. Authority is therefore properly the adjunct of a lawgiver, and cannot except by a metonymy be attributed to a law. The authority of a law is that in or belonging to it which obliges the subject to obey it; or it is the right of the law, (if I may so speak) or rather of the lawgiver, to command obedience. To say then that the authority of a law lies wholly in the threatening, is the same thing as to say that the threatening of the law is all that obliges the subject to obedience; and consequently if the threatening or threatened punishment could be avoided, it would no longer be our duty to obey the law. And for any one to be freed from the penalty of the law, is the same thing as to be freed from the authority or obligation of the law. But surely this is a very unsound principle. It is indeed gross hobbism: The very dregs of antinomianism. According to this principle believers are not subject to the authority of the law, for they are not subject to the penalty or threatening. The authority of a law is presupposed in the threatening, for if the subject were not bound in duty to obey the law, separate from, and antecedent to the consideration of the threatened penalty, it would be unjust to threaten him, and more unjust to punish him for not obeying. Nor is it true that the authority of the law appears only in the threatening. For then the most unrighteous laws may appear to have as much authority or right to command obedience as any; since they may be enforced with penalties: But they have no authority at all; nor do they appear to have any to those who judge of them by right rules. The authority or binding power of a law, consists primarily and principally in these two things, the righteousness of the law itself, and the right of the legislator to enact it: And whatever obligation the penalty lays upon the subject, is but a subordinate and secondary one. It is rather an obligation of interest than of duty. The authority of a lawgiver consists in his right to require obedience under penalty; and whatever it be that gives any one this right, one thing is evident, that it is not merely a power of threatening and punishing—Whatever makes it manifest that any one has the right of legislation, in that alone does his authority appear; but the bare exercise of power, which is all that appears merely in commanding threatening and punishing, does not make it appear that any one has right, unless we are so absurd as to found right merely in irresistible power.

which comprehends the whole duty of man, formally consists. And therefore to understand the nature of holiness, we must know what the divine law requires of us. But as the commandment of God is exceeding broad, comprehending whatever pertains to the moral rectitude of man, we can here only give a general sketch of the duty therein required.

Whatever appears either by the light of nature, or supernatural revelation to be the will of God, is contained in the precept of the divine law. More particularly, our duty may be summed up in three words, right *habits*, *affections* and *actions*.

(1.) The divine law extends to the habits and principles of the soul, requiring a secondary power, promptitude and readiness for such exercises and acts as are holy and good. Holiness comprehends a rectitude of nature, as well as action. This is what we understand by that state of integrity in which the scriptures teach us that man was at first created; which is called uprightness, and righteousness, whereby is signified an agreement or conformity to the rule of God's law—And the privation or defect of this rectitude of nature is therefore sin, being an irregularity forbidden by the law. *

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* If habits are wholly to be resolved into a divine constitution, and are nothing but a law of nature (which has been intimated to be probably the truth of the matter by Mr. H. when examined with true philosophic metaphysic strictness. Serm. on John 1. 13. p. 38.) It seems utterly inconceivable how there can be moral rectitude or obliquity in habits of any kind. A law of nature is nothing but a stated method of divine operation. How then can this be moral goodness in us. Does the law require us to constitute the law of nature or fix the method of divine operation? Or does the law impute the divine constitution, (which is entirely distinct from and extrinsic to our minds and all their exercises,) as virtue or vice to us? Is an act or constitution of the divine being, as such, really

allowed by the author with whom I am principally concerned in this debate, (notwithstanding sundry expressions scattered through his book inconsistent with the doctrine of original righteousness or sin) until I find him expressly denying it. But whatever rectitude of nature man was at first endowed with, the *production* of it by the creating power of God, is in order of nature prior to the *morality of it, or it's relation to the law*. The creating efficiency of God, gave being to the concreated principles of human nature; which was no sooner made than subject to a law exactly suited and proportioned to all its powers and principles; and this law gave *morality and holiness* to these principles. Now since the divine law requires a moral agent to maintain that rectitude and perfection of nature in which he was created, and allows him not to corrupt and disable himself for the duty enjoined on him; we conclude that integrity of nature is a state morally good, and depravity of nature is a state morally evil.

(2.) The divine law regulates the internal or immanent acts of the soul, which according as they are conformable or repugnant to the will of God are holy or sinful. It has been disputed among learned divines whether moral rectitude or obliquity, belongs to the acts both of the understanding and will, or merely to the acts of the will. Whether the acts of the understanding are governed by the will, or the acts of the will by the understanding, which acts first, &c. These

ally and formally our fault or virtue? Such metaphysical flights are I believe beyond the reach of most. As to the pretended difficulty of forming distinct ideas of habits, perhaps there is equal difficulty in forming distinct ideas of the soul or its faculties. Habits may properly be said to be active as well as the faculties, if by activity we mean causal influence into acts. Is not the wisdom of the artificer a cause in its kind of the goodness of his work? But enough of this!

These things I leave to those who have a mind to dispute about goat's wool. After proposing one query to their consideration, viz. Whether any act or idea of the human mind can possibly be conceived of, which does not include some taste or perception of the object as good or evil? Or in other words, whether there is the least evidence that there is or ever was any such faculty as what is called understanding distinct from the heart? Every act of the soul is (I suppose) under the government of the divine law. Those who have a natural capacity, with outward advantages for knowing God and understanding his will, their ignorance is a sinful defect. Right affections are also by the consent of all comprehended in the duty prescribed in the divine law. The love of God and our neighbour is spoken of in scripture as a kind of summary of the duty of man. On the two commandments requiring love, hang all the law and the prophets.

(3.) The law of God extends to actions, or effective acts of the soul, which are sometimes called imperate acts of the will, producing a real effect extrinsic to the active faculty. The affections or immanent acts of the soul do not effect any thing, or have any causal influence without the mind. But the effective acts of the soul are productive of some work, or external action. Now the law of God prescribes rules of behaviour to men, requiring them to do as well as love what is good. It commands us not only to know and love God, but to shew forth his praise, to glorify him, and walk in his ordinances, *to cause our light to shine before men, that others may see our good works.* Not only to love our neighbour, but to carry it justly and kindly to him in speech and behaviour. In a word, that good works are a part of the duty God has required of us, has not yet, that I find, been

openly denied by any bearing the name of Christians ; though some through a fond attachment to peculiar notions in philosophy and religion have overlooked the unavoidable consequences of this truth, as will in due time be manifested.

This may suffice for a general view of the duty required of man in the divine law—*Rectitude of nature, affection, and practice, comprehends whatever belongs to the nature of holiness.* All these things are commanded, and nothing else.

But to have just and determinate conceptions of this matter, there are some important remarks and distinctions necessary to be attended to.

(1.) Holiness is in scripture and in the common language of christians considered as an adjunct, or property both of persons and actions : and there is some difference in the complex idea signified by the word *holiness*, according as it is applied to persons, or their actions, which should be carefully noted. A holy person is a *saint*, one whose heart and life are conformable to the rule of his duty, whose moral character, that is, his principles, affections, and behaviour, are answerable to God's preceptive will. An affection or action is holy when it is in all respects such as the divine law requires. If there be any defect in *a man's moral character*, it is not absolutely holy, though in some particulars it may be good. And if there be any moral defect in *an action* it is not absolutely holy, though in some respects it may be good, or may have some goodness in or belonging to it.* The holiness of any person's character does not consist in any particular virtue, act or work, but in

* 'As there are good actions which have sin adhering to them, so there are sins that have good in them. For, *Bonum erit ex integris, malum ex quocunque defectu.*'

OWEN on the Holy Spirit, p. 248.

in the conjunction of every virtue, act and work required in the divine commandment. The holiness of any particular action does not consist either in the work wrought, or in the manner, or any particular circumstances of the performance, *seperately or in itself considered*, but in the conjunction or concurrence, of the goodness of the action in itself with the goodness of its circumstances and manner of performance.

(2.) The distinction between legal and evangelical holiness must also be noted. *Legal holiness is that which perfectly answers the requirement of the law in every respect. Evangelical holiness, though defective in the eye of the law, is yet so far answerable to the rule of duty as that according to the gracious constitution of the new covenant it is through the mediation of Christ, acceptable and rewardable by God; and is proportioned and adapted to those ends for the sake of which it is required in the gospel.* A person or action is equally unholy if it be in any degree inconformable to the law of God. It is evangelically unholy if deficient in any thing necessary to acceptance with God according to the new covenant. No human person or action is to be found in this world that is legally holy. Evangelical holiness is found in different degrees in the *character* of all true christians, and in *some of their affections and performances*: but it is not found in the unregenerate or any of their actions.

Here then is the great point to be resolved, viz. What is the nature of evangelical holiness? Which agreeable to the distinction abovementioned may be divided into two enquiries. *What is essentially implied in the character of a holy or good man in the gospel acceptance? And what is necessarily required in any act to constitute it evangelically holy, or spiritually good?*

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The general and most essential difference between the character of a saint and sinner in the gospel sense consists chiefly in these things. The true saint is one who is regenerate, or endowed with a supernatural vital principle, with habitual power for holy acts. Being by faith united to Christ he receives from him supplies of grace, vital communications, in order to his furtherance in holiness and comfort. As to the exercises of a principle of holiness in faith, hope, love and good works, these are an essential part of the character of a good man. It is not indeed essential to a state of evangelical holiness that grace be at all times in actual exercise. A habit of holiness will not however in adult persons remain dormant long at a time. It will in various degrees prevail, and have a governing influence into the practice, yet not so as to exclude danger of great degrees of apostacy in time of temptation. This is that seed of God which shall never utterly die or perish in any soul where it is once planted. Though a saint may for a time fail in the acts, he shall not finally fall from the state of holiness. Here then lies the essential universal difference, Whatever good gifts or virtuous endowments the minds of the unregenerate may be furnished with, and however useful and amiable their lives may be, yet they are unable to will or do any thing spiritually good. And however the true christian may fail in acts of holy obedience, that divine nature of which he is made a partaker remains in him.

To resolve the other enquiry, viz. What is required in any act to constitute it an act of gospel holiness there will be need of more consideration. That I may open this point as plainly and fully as I can in a few words, I would premise a few things concerning the habitual principle of holiness, which is the subjective ground of all acts of evangelical obedience, shewing wherein

wherein this is different from natural principles. As this is a secret hidden work, it seems scarce capable of being otherwise described than by its subject, its efficient cause, its end, and effects. The receptive subject is the whole spirit, soul and body, all the powers or faculties of human nature. The efficient cause is the holy Spirit, creating and infusing a vital principle, with a power and promptitude for holy exercises. The end whereof is to prepare a living temple, wherein to take up his everlasting residence : to fit the subject for such exercises and acts as are required in the gospel, and are suitable and necessary for that new state to which he is called, that he may bring forth the fruit of new obedience, to the glory of God's grace, the honour of Jesus Christ, and his gospel, the good of mankind, the present comfort, and eternal salvation of his own soul. The effects are a spiritual change in his apprehensions, affections, enjoyments, aims, and endeavours : dying to sin, living to God, in the daily exercise of repentance, faith, love and good works.

This leads us to consider the nature of those acts which flow from that supernatural habit or principle above described ; in other words what is requisite to constitute an action spiritually good, and according to the evangelical covenant acceptable to God ? and *in the first place*, all acts of acceptable obedience imply or presuppose the person to be in a state of reconciliation with God. This indeed is not properly a qualification of the action, but the agent : and that not an inherent, but relative qualification, yet it is absolutely necessary. The promises and blessings of the covenant belong only to those who are in the covenant. Till a sinner is justified, his being in a state of guilt is an effectual bar to the acceptance of his performances as rewardable with covenant blessings.

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God accepts us, and has a gracious respect to us, in and through the mediator of the new covenant, before he accepts or respects any of our works as acts of gospel holiness.

Secondly, All acts of gospel holiness must in themselves be conformable to the divine command. The work done, the *opus operatum* must be a commanded action, and not a mere human invention. This is what is meant by the substance and matter of duty, about which Mr. H. appears to be so bewildered, and talks in such an extraordinary strain, as if something must needs be intended extrinsic to, and distinct from the act of the soul or agent. This was rather too gross a mistake. One would scarce have expected that Mr. Hopkins, would need to be informed that by the substance or matter of an action is meant *the action as abstracted from its circumstances*, and not any consequent effects distinct from it. Whatever absurdity there is in calling the locomotion of body abstract from the agency of the soul the substance or matter of duty, himself (I suppose) is author of it. If some speaking in popular stile have called the external effects immediately connected with the act of the mind as their cause, and flowing from it according to the laws of nature, by the name of external actions, duties, or sins, it was because on account of this connection they are considered as virtually comprehended in, and the same with the act of the mind: not that they ever dreamed that the mere motion of matter separate from the agency of the mind has any morality in it. It is the act itself commanded to be done that is the matter of duty. It is the act of the will *ad extra*, productive of an external work required in the divine law, that is the substance and matter of external duty. I say then, no action however qualified or circumstanced is holy, if the act itself, as to
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the substance and matter of it, be not commanded, or conformable to the rule of duty.

Thirdly, All acts of holiness must flow from right principles. An action taken nakedly in itself may bear some conformity to the divine command, and yet be so deficient in its causes and principles as to be unholy. The same *effective* acts of the soul may be educible from very different principles. Two servants may be equally attentive, and in the same way, to please their master; while the one acts from love, the other from slavish fear. An unregenerate sinner and a true saint may do the same kind of actions, considered in themselves; the one from holy, the other from mere natural principles. The principles of holy obedience are (1.) A divine nature, a new heart, a supernatural habit communicated in regeneration. (2.) A true faith in God, in Christ, in the divine word, precepts, promises, and threatnings, wherein are contained the rule and motives of evangelical obedience. (3.) The special influence of the holy Spirit dwelling within us, exciting, assisting, and co-operating with us, working in us both to will and to do what is acceptable to God. To which may be added with respect to effective acts, (4.) Love, the greatest of christian graces, without which we with all our endowments and works are nothing.

Fourthly, Acts of gospel holiness must be directed to a right end. A defect here will corrupt the best performances. Many good actions done by believers, instead of being accepted and rewarded in the world to come, will be burnt up as hay and stubble, because not done for an holy end. The ends of holy obedience are, First, the glorifying and pleasing God: Secondly, the salvation of our own souls: Thirdly, the best good of mankind. To these all inferior ends must be subordinated, without which, however good

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and lawful in themselves, they become irregular and inordinate ; but by being sought in their proper place are sanctified to us. Fifthly, There are other circumstances, such as the manner, time, place, &c. of the action which must be rightly ordered according to the divine command. A gross defect or irregularity in these respects, may so deform an otherwise good action, that it is rather to be accounted a sin than a good work. A good man may do an action materially good, and for a good end, and yet it may be so unseasonable, so misplaced, so out of order, and in it's circumstances some how so indecent and improper, that it may really degenerate into sin.

This then is the sum of the matter. Holiness comprehends conformity to the command of God in respect of the matter, manner, principle, and end of action. An action's being conformable to the rule in any one of these several respects, while inconformable in the others, is not sufficient to denominate it holy. So far as it is conformable to the rule of duty it is good ; but not every instance of conformity to the rule is holiness. When goodness of principle, end, manner, and circumstances concur and concenter in an act materially good, the conjunction or coincidence of all these constitute that intire conformity to the will of God which is true holiness. But neither will a good end and principle sanctify a forbidden action, nor is the doing a commanded action an instance of holy obedience, if essentially defective in principle and end.

The divine law is a perfect rule of duty ; nor is any action good or acceptable any further than it is conformable to it. And yet as was before hinted, the sincere obedience of true believers though far short of legal perfection is acceptable to God through the mediation of Christ. For by the grace of the gospel
christians

christians are delivered from the rigour of the law, as Calvin phrases it. * That is, though the *rule of our duty* be not at all abated, yet the *rule of acceptance with God in acts of obedience* is not according to the rigour of law, but the grace of the new covenant. According to the rigour of law, one sin is sufficient to hinder the acceptance of a person, or any of his actions, however perfect they may have been: And besides the least sinful defect in the strength or degree of affection or endeavour renders the act utterly unacceptable to God. But by the grace of the new covenant the weakest desires and endeavours of obedience, if sincere and right in the several respects above mentioned, are through Christ's mediation accepted; notwithstanding any sinful mixtures, and defects in degree, with which they are attended. These defects being forgiven, and as it were covered by the merits of Christ, hinder not the acceptance of the sincere obedience of believers, as to those ends and purposes for which it is in the gospel required of them. †

It will naturally be here enquired; Whether those works of christians, which though materially good, and flowing in the main from right principles, and aiming at a right end, are yet in no small degree irregular in respect of the manner, and some circumstances

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* Instit. lib. 3. chap. 19. sect. 5.

† Our author in his sermons on Rom. 7. 7. p. 8. says, "Jesus Christ did not come into the world and assume the character of mediator in order to get this (moral) law repealed or abated, as many have very absurdly and wickedly believed and taught." Absurd and wicked doctrine indeed! If there are any among us who avow so gross an error (though I know of none) christians are bound in duty to God, and charity to the souls of men, to testify earnestly against it. At the same time charity allows us not to insinuate so high a charge against any who do not evidently appear to be justly obnoxious to it.

stances of the performance ; are on that account unholy and unacceptable according to the tenor of the new covenant. The resolution of this case will, I hope, give some further light to the subject of our present enquiry, the nature of evangelical holiness.

Let it then be carefully observed, that there are some acts of the mind which have whatever is essential to a holy action inseparably connected with, or rather involved in the substance and matter of the act. Thus love and resignation to God are acts not only materially good, that is, conformable to the divine will considered barely in themselves, but they are such acts as necessarily imply *holy principles*, and cannot possibly flow from any other : Such acts as are immediately directed to and connected with a *holy end*, even the highest that a creature can respect : Such acts as can never be unseasonable, or improper *at any time, in any place or circumstances* : And in a word, are so essentially and intrinsically right, holy, and spiritual in the very substance of the act, that though they may be imperfect in degree, yet they cannot be evangelically unholy, nor will they ever fail of a gracious acceptance with God through Jesus Christ.

But there are other actions, such as all commanding or effective acts of the will required in the divine command, which may be willed and done for the substance of the act, without the circumstances and qualifications above mentioned as necessary to constitute an action spiritually good. The action does not necessarily imply holy principles and ends, and may be very irregular in respect of manner and other circumstances. Besides some qualifications required in a commanded action to constitute it spiritually good may be applied to an action materially repugnant to the divine law. An unlawful action through error
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of judgment may be done for a good end, and a holy principle exercised in doing it ; And on the contrary an action good in itself may be done without any respect to a holy end, or any exercise of a holy principle. Now though it be certain that whatever is required in the divine command is good, and of consequence both the substance and the requisite qualifications are both good in themselves ; yet neither the goodness of the action in itself detached from other necessary qualifications, nor the goodness of these qualifications if applied to a forbidden action, are sufficient to constitute the complex work an act of evangelical obedience. There is indeed a partial imperfect kind of moral goodness, or conformity to the command in such actions ; * but they want that integrity and completeness of conformity which is essential to true holiness.

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* It has of late become very customary with many to use the terms, virtue, moral virtue, true virtue, moral goodness, &c. to express what is in scripture called holiness. But why should we borrow our language from the Greek and Roman schools rather than the sacred oracles ? It may give our discourses more of the appearance of philosophical dissertations, but is attended with several inconveniences, besides increasing the ambiguity of language. The apostle Paul was not ignorant of the language of philosophers in his time, yet he seems to have carefully avoided it in all his writings. Nor does it appear that he ever used the words signifying moral goodness or virtue, in the sense in which they were used by the philosophers, and are used at this day. The reason seems to be that he was unwilling to have gospel holiness mistaken for the moral virtue recommended by the gentile philosophers. There is a moral goodness which is not holiness. The morality of an action is it's relation to a law. It's moral goodness is it's conformity to the law. It's holiness is it's *intire conformity* as above explained. Every instance of conformity to the law *in any respect* may properly be called moral goodness, but not every instance of *moral goodness* is holiness. The old divines thought this distinction to be useful and necessary. I cannot but think they were herein more judicious than those who reject it.

To apply this to the case under present consideration ; when christians in the exercise of holy principles, and with a sincere aim to obey and glorify God, do good actions in a somewhat improper and irregular manner ; though what is inconformable to the divine command be not acceptable, yet whatever goodness there is in the *performance*, will in this case find a gracious acceptance ; and whatever is amiss in the *manner*, a gracious pardon. Yea suppose a work not good in itself should thro' error of judgment be done from a sincere respect to God and his glory ; though the work itself, or effective act of the soul be sinful and unacceptable ; yet the exercises of love to God and sincere desires to obey him, are acts in themselves universally and essentially holy and good. Though therefore the work will be lost, yet the exercises of holy affections accompanying the work having in them the intire nature of evangelical holiness, will be accepted. In a word, such is the grace of the new covenant, that not one holy affection, desire or motion of the heart, however feeble, and however connected, mingled, and as it were incorporated with sin, shall be forgotten or unacceptable. Though the christian may suffer great loss of dross, hay and stubble, by the fire that shall try his work, yet not the least dust of gold shall perish among the rubbish. Every shattered fragment (if I may so speak) of true holiness, collected into one sum, shall follow him into the future world, and receive an eternal reward.

Corollary. If the nature of true holiness has here been justly represented, it seems not to be an exact and just definition to say "*its essence consists in general benevolence.*" * For though it be true that general benevolence is a holy affection, yet holiness does not consist wholly in right affections. Not only love but
good

* Vid. EDWARDS on the nature of true virtue. p. 117—119.

good works are required in the divine command. Effective acts of the soul are as really of the nature of holiness as immanent exercises, when they are in themselves, and in their circumstances and qualifications, conformable to the will of God. That conformity to the will of God which gives them the nature of holiness, respects the performances, as well as the concomitant affections. And besides, there is a rectitude of nature conformable to the law, distinct from all exercises of the soul whatever. This definition then appears to be defective, narrow, and inadequate. Whatever is required in the divine law, belongs to the nature of virtue, if we mean by it the same with true holiness; but that something besides benevolence is required in the divine law has been in some measure manifested, and shall by God's help, be further demonstrated in the next section. *

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- * It may perhaps be agreeable to some readers to have this point stated a little more metaphysically. We may then observe, that virtue (that is holiness) is a word which may be taken either in an abstract or concrete sense; and may in either of those senses be defined. Virtue in the abstract, or virtuousness is a *quality of some habit or act* of a moral agent. Virtue in the concrete is a *qualified habit or act*. In the abstract, it is *conformity to the law*. In the concrete it is a *habit or act conformable to the law*. Virtue in the abstract, has for it's *subject* some habit or act required in the law. And it's *formal reason* which is all that can be meant by it's *essence* is it's *agreement with the law*. Virtue in the concrete, has for it's *subject* a moral agent, its *substance or matter* is some habit or act conformable to the law, it's *form* consists in the conformity thereof to the law. It appears then that to say the essence of virtue consists in benevolence, is not an exact definition, whether we take the word virtue *abstractly* or *concretely*. Virtue in the *abstract* is not benevolence—for benevolence is an act or habit, but virtuousness is neither act nor habit, but the conformity thereof to the law. Benevolence is one instance of virtue in the *concrete sense*, and an important one, but not the only one. Virtue in this sense consists essentially not only in

The nature of true holiness has been thus far considered. The impotency of the unregenerate consists in a want of power for exercises and acts of this kind. It only remains to finish the account we proposed to give

in benevolence, but in every other act or habit duly conformable to the law of God.

And as virtue may be defined from it's relation to the divine law as it's *perfect and adequate rule*, so it may also be defined from it's *respect to the highest good*, or the good of the universe, which is (as we may say) the original reason and foundation of the divine law. The highest good of the universe may be considered as a measure or standard by which to try whether any thing be truly and simply good. And accordingly true virtue may be defined either *in the abstract*—is the agreement and consent of the habits and acts of the mind with the good of the universe, or *in the concrete*, as the habits and acts of the mind agreeing and consenting with the good of the universe. It is in this way that Mr. Edwards aims to define the nature of true virtue in his dissertation on that subject. But as I humbly conceive, has not done it with accuracy and exactness. All his definitions are in the *concrete*, but they are neither adequate to the subject, nor scarce consistent with each other. Sometimes he says that true virtue consists in *benevolence to being in general*—sometimes it is *a consent, propensity and union of heart*, to being in general, that is *immediately exercised* in a general good will. Which is to me a very dark sentence, nor can I determine whether this consent, propensity, &c. means an *act or habit*. A little after he says that his meaning is that the nature of true virtue consists in a *disposition* to benevolence towards being in general, and again that no affections towards particular persons or beings are of the nature of true virtue but *such as arise from a generally benevolent temper*, or from that *habit and frame of mind* wherein consists a disposition to love being in general. And once more all virtue consists in *that affection of heart* to being which is exercised in benevolence or an inclination to it's good. Does there not appear to be great perplexity and embarrassment in these definitions? Sometimes we are told that the essence of virtue consists in an *affection*, sometimes in a *habit* disposing to that affection, sometimes in something we can hardly tell whether *habit or affection*, sometimes it seems in *both habits and affections*—sometimes all virtue consists in an *affection exercised in an affection*: And as for *actions or effective acts* they

give of this matter, that we say a word or two concerning the *degree* of that impotency unto acts of true holiness, to which the unregenerate are subject. It is manifest from scripture, and will be I suppose acknowledged, that no mere man is able in this life to attain to legal holiness, or perfect conformity to the law in any action. As to evangelical holiness the unregenerate, though endowed with a remote power for such acts in the faculties of their mind, have not a next or habitual power for them. For (1.) they are not in a state of reconciliation, without which their works cannot be acceptable: Nor (2.) are they furnished with the principles of gospel holiness; viz. a new heart, a living faith, and the special influence of the holy Spirit, implying a vital union to Christ, without whom we can do nothing: Nor (3.) can they direct any of their actions ultimately to the glory of God: And therefore though they may perform some actions materially good, (as shall presently be shewn) yet they cannot perform them in a holy manner: Nor are they in their present state capable of such exercises as imply true holiness in the substance of the act. It must then be concluded that for the performance of duties in a holy spiritual manner, all who are in a state of irregnacy are without strength.

Proceed we now to the second enquiry, viz. What powers and assistances for action the unregenerate may be the subjects of?

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they seem to be quite overlooked and forgotten, as if they had nothing of the nature of virtue. But if we define virtue in the concrete, it is as improper to say that its essence consists in this or that particular instance whether habit, affection or action, as it would be to say that the essence of justice consists in any *particular exercise or act of justice*. The essence of concrete virtue consists in *every habit, affection and action* conformable to the divine law, and agreeing with or favoring the general good of the universe, as has been above explained.

The question is not concerning the primary power of action consisting in the natural faculties of the soul, in which respect there is no essential difference between one man and another : But what secondary powers or principles of action the unregenerate are endowed with, and what further helps beyond the mere powers of nature may be and are sometimes afforded to them. And let it be remembered, that we do not mean to place the power of the unregenerate in any natural principles separate from supernatural assistances by the outward dispensation of the word, and inward influence of the Spirit of God ; but we say that from the concurrence of all these there arises an immediate or next power for the performance of such actions, as we shall afterwards shew are required in the word of God.

To instance in some particulars : The unregenerate are able from natural principles, assisted by instruction, and the influence of the holy Spirit, to reform their lives, to purpose, speak and do many things materially good, wherein the substance of effective acts of obedience is contained. They have a power to attend to the reading and preaching of God's word, and pray to him for his saving mercy : And to do this in such a manner as is in some respects agreeable to the divine command ; that is, seriously and conscientiously : With a deep concern to escape the misery of a state of sin and guilt : With a conviction of conscience (and a just one too) that God has commanded, and encouraged them to do so, and consequently that it is their duty : And with some moral sense or taste of the fitness and reasonableness of their doing these things, and of the moral turpitude of a contrary behaviour.

It is not my present business to prove that such actions, and such circumstances of action as have here been

been mentioned, are in themselves good, and commanded by God. That will be attended to in it's proper place. What I have now to do is to shew that the unregenerate have a power by the common aids of divine grace to do such actions, and in such a manner as has here been declared.

This appears *first from fact*. They have sometimes done all these things. Now as every act presupposes a power sufficient for it, it is certain that men have a principle or power for the doing of such actions as are done by them.

Secondly, The same may be proved *a priori* by taking a view of human nature, with it's powers, principles, habits, and springs of action. These when directed and excited by that light and influence which may be conveyed to the mind of an unregenerate person from the word and Spirit of God, are sufficient, without the infusion of a holy principle, to enable him to will and do all these things. There is nothing in such exercises and acts which may not be educed from natural principles, under the advantages above mentioned.

To manifest this we may take a brief survey of the principles of action natural to mankind, together with those advantages and assistances which in different degrees ordinarily attend the outward dispensation of the gospel. This enquiry will be necessary to obviate exceptions, as will appear in the progress of this disputation. But if the reader has a mind to avoid metaphysical disquisitions, contenting himself with the simple doctrine of divine revelation, and the simple dictates of common sense, he may if he pleases pass over what follows to the 73d page, which for the sake of some readers has been inserted.

It will be proper in the first place, to shew what is here intended by a principle of action. The word

principle is of a very general signification. It comprehends whatever has a causal influence into an action. It may be applied to the agent, who is the *efficient* principle, to the faculty or primary power, which metaphysical writers call the *substantial principle*. But these are foreign to our present enquiry. What we here mean by a principle of action, is *that in or belonging to a voluntary agent, whereby he is fitted, guided, and disposed unto the performance of such kind of actions as have been mentioned*. Or in one word the *formal principle*. These principles might be reduced to two heads, viz. the *directing*, and the *moving or prompting* principles. But without being solicitous to reduce them to these classes they may conveniently enough be comprized in these four particulars. Reason, Conscience, Self-love, and other particular inclinations.

1. Reason is a principle of action natural to mankind. By which I do not mean simply the natural faculty of reasoning and judging, but as furnished with an habitual power, fitness, and promptitude to reason, judge and dictate *aright*, especially in matters relating to practice. Hereby we discern the connection between causes and their effects, the suitableness of means to their ends, and in what way we are to pursue that happiness we desire. When therefore we are convinced that we are hastning into the eternal world, where those who are reconciled to God will be happy in his favour, and those who are obnoxious to his wrath will be punished with everlasting destruction, and that now is the season of mercy, in which God is using means with us, and calling us to attend on them, in order to obtain that knowledge of the way of salvation, and that divine influence which may persuade and enable us to an acquiescence in, and consent to it ; reason will dictate that it is fit and right
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for us to regard our eternal interest according to it's importance ; and diligently use those outward means whereby God is wont to communicate to sinners the blessings of his special grace. The dictate of reason will have a tendency to determine our wills to such a conduct as it prescribes. For there is a propensity in the mind to follow the practical dictates of it's own reason ; which though often controuled by some particular appetite or inclination acting in opposition thereto, will yet even when overpowered make a strong resistance. " The dictate of reason (says Mr. EDWARDS,) declaring what is most for a person's happiness taking in the whole of his duration, when it takes place, is one thing that is put into the scales, and is to be considered as a thing which has concern in the compound influence which moves or induces the will," &c. * Though the soul be prompted to the choice of it's ultimate end not by reason but by taste, yet in the choice of the means conducive to this end the dictate of reason has great weight to determine the will. Whether therefore it be proper to call reason a prompting, or only a directing principle of action, certain it is that it's dictates have a tendency to influence the conduct of mankind. Reason assisted by the word and Spirit of God, will tend to engage the unregenerate to a serious attendance to the means of grace.

2. Conscience is another principle of action natural to mankind. In this principle is implied a moral sense approving virtue and disapproving vice ; whence arises a sense of desert, as an eminent writer of our own has justly observed. † That there is a moral sense or taste of the natural beauty of virtue and deformity

* Enquiry concerning the will, p. 12.

† EDWARDS on the nature of true virtue, chap. 5.

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formity of vice, distinct from a supernatural principle of holiness, may I suppose be taken for granted. Now conscience I say, when enlightened by the word and awakened by the Spirit of God, is both a directing and prompting principle of action. It directs men what they ought to do, it represents the obligation they are under to do it, the reasonableness of complying with their duty, the unfitness of a contrary behaviour; and from a sense of the difference between right and wrong warns them what to expect as the just consequence of their actions. The approbation of conscience implies some perception or taste of the natural beauty of virtue, and this denotes some kind of propensity in the heart to such acts as are thus approved, though not a holy spiritual propensity to spiritual excellency as such. A sense of beauty of any kind implies taste or inclination of soul to it. The moral sense shews that there is something in it's object attractive of the heart. That painful remorse which is caused by a consciousness of sin shews that it is repugnant to some taste or inclination: For as pleasure consists in the gratification of some taste or appetite, so pain arises from the disagreement and contrariety of it's object to some taste or appetite. When therefore an unregenerate sinner is convinced that it is his duty by virtue of the divine command to reform his life, and attend the means of grace; conscience as a director, moral inducer to, and approver of duty, will have an influence to determine the will to a compliance with it's dictates. Other natural inclinations may be too strong for conscience to controul, yet when it is overpowered by lust, there will be many times a hard and uneasy renitency.

But Mr. H. objects, p. 10. "Natural conscience, so far as it is distinguished from the heart, is no principle of action at all. The heart is the source
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“ and seat of all moral exercise and action. Natural
 “ conscience therefore, as distinguished from this, is
 “ neither virtuous nor vicious.”

I can scarce satisfy myself what is intended in this
 objection ; but if I can guess at the meaning and de-
 sign of it, it is exceeding impertinent. Natural con-
 science belongs to the heart, and is a principle of it,
 if we understand by the heart the same that is meant
 by it in scripture. “ By the heart,” says Dr. Owen,
 “ the scripture understandeth all the faculties of our
 “ souls, as they are an entire rational principle of all
 “ moral and spiritual operations.”* And again
 more particularly : “ The heart generally denotes the
 “ whole soul of man, and all the faculties of it, not
 “ absolutely, but as they are all one principle of moral
 “ operations, as they all concur to our doing good or
 “ evil. The mind as it enquireth, discerneth, and
 “ judgeth what is to be done, and what refused ; the
 “ will as it chuseth or refuseth and avoids ; the
 “ affections as they like or dislike, cleave to, or have
 “ an aversion from that which is proposed to them ;
 “ the conscience as it warns and determines, are all to-
 “ gether called the heart.”† We will then readily
 grant that conscience as distinct from all the powers
 and principles of the soul is no principle of operation,
 but we do not mean any such thing by natural con-
 science. We suppose (and if we are wrong we would
 gladly be set right) that natural conscience is a prin-
 ciple of the heart or soul, considered as the source of
 moral action. It is one principle among others that
 has influence in determining the acts of the will ;
 which is very consistent with the supposition of the
 heart’s being the principle of all moral operation.—

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* OWEN on apostacy, chap. 13.

† Id. On indwelling sin. chap. 3.

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There are several particular principles of rational and moral action in the human mind, which have their several influence into it's acts, and being joined together they form *one compound principle of action*, which we call the heart. And if we should take the word *Heart* to signify the will, which is perhaps what our author means by it, natural conscience would still be a principle of it. For it includes the moral sense, as has been just observed. And the moral sense implies taste, which doubtless belongs to the appetitive faculty. The apostle calls the impression and sense of duty which the Gentiles had in their conscience, the work of the law written in their hearts. * Yea, if the conscience belong wholly to the understanding, it may yet properly be called a principle of moral action, if any regard be paid to the dictate of conscience declaring what is duty, if this be one thing to be put into the scale, which if there be any such principle in human nature as the moral sense cannot be denied. The understanding is allowed to be a principle of action as well as the will by those who make use of this distinction of the faculties. Yea what is more usual among divines than to call the *acts* of the soul, such as knowledge, faith, love, &c. principles of such actions as flow from them? And would not that man be thought impertinent who should seriously insist, that these as distinguished from the heart are no principles of moral action, because the heart is the source and seat of all moral exercise? Or would any intelligent and candid person imagine there is any impropriety in saying, that in some sense the whole soul is the only principle of moral action, and at the same time that the several distinct *faculties*, *habits* and *various acts* of the soul, are distinct and several principles

* Rom. 2. 15

principles of operation? That natural conscience, in itself considered, is either virtuous or sinful, we do not assert, nor have any occasion to do it in order to maintain that it is a principle of such actions as are here supposed.

3. Self-love is another natural principle whereby men may be prompted to reform their lives, and attend on the means of grace. This need not be proved, Mr. H. asserting that "the unregenerate act only from self-love." What is the proper notion of self-love, is a point that much needs to be duly stated and cleared, having had so large a share of grave perplexity through the subtilties of vain philosophy. The reader will I hope pardon me if I divert a little from the main business in hand, to set this matter in a true light.

It will be proper to premise some general observations concerning love, which may help us in resolving our present enquiry concerning the nature of self-love.

Love being a simple perception or affection of the heart, cannot properly be defined; yet it is felt and known by all men. It is commonly distinguished into two kinds, *benevolence* and *complacence*. *Benevolence is love to persons or beings capable of happiness. Complacence is love to those things which are objects of happiness.*

Benevolence is, I think, justly termed by Mr. Edwards,* "that affection or propensity of heart to
 "any being which causes it to incline to it's well
 "being, or disposes it to desire and take pleasure in
 "it's happiness." Here we may observe, that our love to or delight in the happiness of any being is not benevolence, if this be a just account of it, but is an immediate effect, a distinct act of the mind flowing from it. Both the *object* and *act* are different. The

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* On the Nature of true Virtue, pag. 119.

object of benevolence is some perceptive being, which is distinct from the happiness of the same being. The *acts* are also different. For we love and delight in the *happiness* of a person, *because* we love the *person himself*. Benevolence is such a union of soul in affection to the person beloved as is a foundation or cause of a participation in the good or evil that befalls him. Hence arises a love to, or *complacency* in his happiness.

Complacency is *that affection we have for those things which are agreeable to some taste or appetite, sensitive or mental*. Happiness is nothing else but our *enjoying* those things which are *objects of our complacency*. Our love to the happiness of those for whom we have a benevolent affection, is our complacency in their happiness. Our love of knowledge, virtue, arts, riches, honour, food, is our complacency in them. And when we have a love of complacency for persons, it is the *character or endowments* of the persons that is it's precise object.

These two distinct kinds of love being thus noted and described in general, I proceed to say, that benevolence may in respect of it's object be divided into two branches, viz. *Self-love*, and *love of other perceptive beings*. It may be somewhat unusual to call self-love a branch of benevolence: But as the import of the word will well bear this use of it, so there are good authorities to support it. What I aim at is to distinguish a love of good will, whether to ourselves or others, from love of complacency, which seems to have been very often in some degree confounded with it. As self-love is only benevolence to ourselves, the description of benevolence which has just been given may be applied to self-love, viz. "It is that affection
" or propensity of heart to ourselves, which causes us
" to incline to our own well being, or disposes us to
" desire,

“desire, and take pleasure in our own happiness.”—
Here then I would observe,

1. Self-love is not properly called a love of our own happiness in any sense. The love of happiness is complacency. It has not a perceptive being for it's immediate object.

The love of our own happiness is an ambiguous expression. Sometimes it is put for the love of that whatever it be, that is delightful, or an object of happiness to us. This indeed seems to be an improper way of speaking, amounting at bottom to no more than this, our loving what we love. The love of our own happiness most properly means *a complacency in our own happy state, because it is our own*, arising from benevolence to ourselves; even as we take complacency in the happiness of those we love because it is theirs, they are the subjects of it. But neither love to those things which are objects of delight to us, nor the love of our own delight as our own is self-love, though both the one and the other have often been confounded with it. As this ought to be carefully attended to in order to conceive aright of this matter, and yet, so far as I have observed, is generally overlooked, I crave leave to consider it more distinctly.

(1.) Love to those things which are delightful to us is intirely distinct from self-love. It will be allowed by those with whom we are presently concerned, that *that* love to, or complacency in the happiness of others which arises from benevolence to them, is distinct from self-love. I add, that love to any thing *as an object of happiness*, however private or personal the pleasure resulting from it may be, is *toto cælo* distinct from self-love. This may seem a strange assertion to those who have received it from eminent divines, that it is meer self-love that appears in the

disposition of men to be pleased with the objects of their private and personal delight. But if we keep in mind the true notion of self-love, viz. good will to ourselves, we shall see that there is nothing of self-love in these inclinations and affections. Both the object and act or affection are wholly different, neither does the one affection flow from the other. The object of self-love is ourselves; the object of these appetites and inclinations is something diverse from and extrinsic to ourselves that is delightful to us. The affection of self-love is *benevolence* to ourselves: The affection we have to that which delights us, is complacency in it as a pleasant good.

Moreover our love to, or complacency in particular objects of delight, does not proceed from self-love. Self-love is not the cause why I find an immediate personal delight in beauty, proportion, particular studies, employments, recreations, food which I may be fond of. The foundation of this delight, is a particular taste or relish for these things, and not the good will I have for myself. Self-love prompts us to seek those things which are objects or means of happiness to us, but it no more creates in us a taste for these things, or causes us to love them, and delight in them, than it creates the things themselves loved and delighted in. Nor does self-love flow from our complacency in particular objects. Complacency in the character of persons may be a foundation of benevolence to them; but complacency in something distinct from ourselves, is not the cause of good will to ourselves. Nor does self-love flow from complacency in our own character, nor has any necessary connection with it, as is too manifest to need any proof.

This by the way shews the falshood of that principle which Mr. H. often lays down, and builds much upon it, without once offering any thing, that I remember,

member, in the shape of an argument to prove it, viz. *that the unregenerate act wholly from self-love*. As this is no where asserted in scripture, nor I suppose, ever was, will, or can be proved, it may without presumption be called in question. To say that men naturally act only from self-love, implies that all the natural inclinations or affections of men prompting them to action are resolved into self-love: The impropriety and absurdity of which has just been noted. Men often in their actions follow the impulse of particular instincts or appetites in opposition to their own interest on the whole, yea in opposition to "what reason declares to be best or most for their happiness taking in the whole of their duration." * - Love to our own happiness *in general*, is the only love of happiness that flows from self-love; and therefore self-love so far as it governs the acts of our will, will always prompt us to chuse and do what we think will be most for our good upon the whole, taking in the whole of our existence. But a regard to what we judge will be most for our good and happiness upon the whole is far from having always the whole government and determination of our wills and actions. Particular inclinations, passions and appetites, are sometimes so strong, that instead of submitting to the rules and measures which a regard to good upon the whole would prescribe, they carry the will captive as it were, and turn the scale against all the renitency of self-love. Whenever a present pleasure is preferred to a future advantage which a person judges will be greater when it comes, † it is not a regard for our own interest upon the whole (which is the only regard for it that flows from self-love) that determines the will in chusing the present pleasure. For a regard to our own
happiness

* See EDWARDS on the Will, p. 12.

† Idem pag. 8.

happiness upon the whole, if that were the sole governing principle, would incline the will to the choice of that which is judged to be upon the whole most for our advantage : But it is the strength of a particular inclination to the present pleasure, intirely distinct from self-love, or a love to our general happiness, which causes that pleasure to appear more agreeable than a greater advantage at a distance.

There are also many actions which flow partly from a general regard to our own happiness, and partly from particular tastes or inclinations. Such as eating and drinking, acts of kindness to those we love, of compassion to the miserable, attendance on divine ordinances, and in a word all actions which may in themselves give present pleasure, and be also of advantage hereafter. A regard to our own happiness on the whole will also incline us to the indulgence of every appetite, when the pleasure of indulgence is not followed with disadvantages sufficient to counterbalance it. On this account it may be difficult or impossible to determine concerning particular actions, how far we were prompted to them by appetite or *particular inclination*, and how far by a *general regard* to our own happiness flowing from self-love. But the difference between these two principles of action is palpable ; and that both have their influence into our conduct is undeniable. Sometimes one is the governing principle, and sometimes the other.

It is methinks to be regretted that the confused unphilosophical notions of the old Epicureans, Hobbs, and the most corrupt of the infidel writers, and that strange affectation of resolving all particular affections natural to mankind into self-love, in opposition to common sense, should be revived among us by christian writers, and those of no mean note. But to proceed,

2. Love to our own happiness is not self-love. This has been explained to mean complacence in our own welfare, as our own. Though this flows immediately and necessarily from self-love, and is often blended with it, yet the very terms shew that both the object and affection are of a different kind. The object of self-love is *my self*, a perceptive being. Happiness a *desirable good* is the object of my affection, when I love my own happiness. The affections I have for these different objects are also of a different kind, though both called by the name of love. The one is benevolence to myself, the other complacence in my own happiness. Benevolence does not imply complacence in the person beloved, nor does complacence imply benevolence to the good beloved.

3. Both self-love, and the love of our own happiness are different from selfishness. Selfishness is a regard to ourselves and our own good, exclusive of all regards to others or their good. Two things are expressed in this definition. First a love to ourselves and our own happiness. Secondly an exclusion of love to others and their happiness. Observe here, that the exclusion or privation of love to others added to self-love changes the idea. It is adding wickedness to it. For the viciousness of selfishness consists not at all in the love of ourselves or of our happiness, but wholly in the exclusion of love to others and their happiness. "Self-love is a very useful and necessary principle in the world of mankind." It not only conduces to their preservation and comfort here, but "in innumerable respects restrains from acts of true wickedness, and puts men upon seeking true virtue."* But the want of love to others is neither good nor useful; it is utterly sinful, and in its tendency

* EDWARDS on the Nature of Virtue, pag. 182, 183.

dency most pernicious. This defect is the true cause of the sinfulness of men's actions. Self love is not opposite to the love of God and our neighbour, any more than loving one person is opposite to loving another. It neither implies nor excludes it. Nor does it appear that self-love is in general too strong, but only that love to others is too weak. The disorders and miseries which abound in the world through the wickedness of men, are perhaps chiefly owing to the inordinate strength of particular appetites and inclinations, ungoverned by a regard to their own general good.

Mr. H. has given two definitions of self-love.—The first is a love of happiness, the second is selfishness.* It appears that he has intirely mistaken the thing in both. It is neither the one nor the other—but in short no more nor less than good will to ourselves.

But it will be said, self-love in the unregenerate is without benevolence to other beings, so is indeed selfishness. “They have no respect or regard either to God or man only for selfish ends, and as the fruit and exercise of this selfishness. And this being directly opposite to all that is truly good, so far as men act from this principle, they sin.”

Whether self-love be sin, and whether all actions flowing from it are sin, will afterwards be considered. At present I will only attend briefly to these two enquiries: Whether the unregenerate have no good will to others or delight in their happiness, except what flows from and is resolvable into meer self-love? And whether self-love in them is selfishness?

I have shewn that men have naturally particular appetites and inclinations to objects distinct from themselves or their own happiness; which inclinations are sometimes

* Pag. 121.

sometimes so strong as to controul and govern self-love itself. It is now enquired whether there be in men unregenerate any love to *persons* distinct from self-love, and which is not educed from, and to be resolved into it as it's source and only principle? Some have earnestly endeavoured to prove that there is not. Mr. H. though he has not offered one sentence that I remember tending to evince the certainty or probability of what he asserts, is behind hand of none in confidently affirming, that "*the unregenerate have no regard to any only for selfish ends, and as a fruit and exercise of selfishness.*" How he confounds the ideas of self-love and selfishness has been noted, and shall presently be further manifested. We will put the most candid construction to his words, and suppose that by selfishness he means self-love. But how earnestly soever he may beg, or how peremptorily soever he may challenge a concession, that men unregenerate have no love or regard to any others except what flows from self-love, I can by no means consent at present that this be taken for granted.

For 1. All that has been offered to prove this, so far as I have hitherto observed, tends only to shew that *possibly* self-love may be the only principle whence all those appearances of good will and kindness towards others which are observable in mankind in general may be educed. The argument in it's full strength is no more than this. It may be so, therefore it is so. It is possible, therefore it is certain. But by what rule of logic can such a way of arguing be justified? * If it were true that all kind affections towards others *may be* effects of meer self-love, how will this prove that they *certainly are*? They may as well arise from friendly inclinations, instincts, and dispositions implanted in human nature. The contrary never

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* A posse ad esse non valet consequentia.

was nor can be proved. We may then full as justly conclude, that since the love which men have for their friends and relatives and others may arise from a particular instinct or disposition of human nature distinct from self-love, therefore it does arise from such a principle, and not from meer self-love. Such an argument I know would not be conclusive; yet it would have this advantage above the other, that it would conclude agreeable to the common sentiments of mankind. But to conclude that all unregenerate men are as selfish in their kindest actions towards those they most love, as the most hard hearted oppressors are in their most unconscionable measures to promote their private interests, is, I dare say, contrary to the common sense of fools and philosophers.

2. If the unregenerate act merely from self-love, then we are under no obligations of gratitude to them for any acts of kindness they may do us. Children have no more reason to be thankful to their parents, however affectionate and careful for their welfare, than if they only nursed them as lambs to kill and eat them. If there be no love exercised towards us, or kindness designed to us, except what is wholly reduceable to love and kindness to themselves, we owe no gratitude, or thanks, or recompence for it. Our obligation to gratitude is founded upon some favour done or designed to us for our sakes, and not wholly for the sake of the benefactor. If after receiving kindnesses from any one we find that he had no ultimate intention to do us good, but only to serve himself, we feel ourselves at once discharged from the obligations of gratitude. If a man should express the warmest affections to a woman, both by words and gifts, meerly to bribe her to submit to his will, that he might enjoy the pleasure of the sixth sense (as *Scaliger* calls it) by abusing her, here is no obligation to

to gratitude. If self-love be the only principle of action, and self-interest the only end ultimately aimed at, it matters not whether a man aims at advancing his wealth or honor, or pleasure of any kind. If he has no ultimate intention of benefiting any but himself, (which it is certain he has not if he acts meerly from self-love) no thanks or recompence is due for benefits conferred, how many and great soever they may be. But this surely is a consequence not to be endured, which at one stroke cancels all obligations of gratitude to parents, friends, and benefactors, for all favours and kindnesses, if they are unregenerate. I add,

3. That love which the unregenerate have sometimes to others, cannot possibly be educed from self-love. I grant there is a love to others, both a love of benevolence and complacence, which may be resolved into meer self-love as it's principle and source. Thus, self-love produces complacence in our own happiness. Hence arises complacence in a character favourable to our own happiness. Complacence in the character produces benevolence to the person. But self-love does not produce either benevolence or complacence towards another *for his own sake*, but meerly in order to my own benefit. A regard to our own welfare will cause us to love what we think is conducive to it *as a useful good*, but not *as a delightful good*—that is, to love it as a *means*, but not as an *end*. We may from this principle love a character that is favourable to our interest, and love the happiness of the person, and be much delighted in it, *for our own sakes*, as a means of our own happiness, but not *for it's own sake*, as an object of happiness. It is the very same kind of love which we have for a fruitful-field, or a favourable season. It is true persons do us good designedly, whereas inanimate things

are useful without design or consciousness. But this makes no difference in the view of meer self-love. That will never cause us to love either the character or the happy state of any one in the least degree in itself, or for it's own sake, but only as profitable to us. Separate the means from the end, and our regard for them will cease immediately and intirely, if we valued them only for the sake of the end. It alters not the case at all in this respect, whether the means of our happiness are conscious or not. Meer self-love will never cause us to love any person, or to desire his happiness, or be pleased with it at all, as agreeable in itself, but purely in order to our own interest, that he may serve us the better ; and when we expect no further advantage by his means, we shall be perfectly indifferent how it fares with him.

But it is evident that the unregenerate have sometimes such a love to others, as causes them to have a real pleasure in and concern for their welfare, separate from all hopes or prospects of being benefited by them. For it will discover itself strongly in such circumstances where there are no such prospects. Is it not often seen that such when they are in their own apprehension just leaving the world, and have no expectation of being any longer served by their friends, will appear as much or more concerned for them as when they had hopes of living long to enjoy them. But as to those things which are valued only for their use, however they might value them before, the prospect of having no further advantage at once cools their affection, and makes them unconcerned and indifferent about them. It is not mere self-love that prompts a man to expose his life to save the life of one, who he never expects will be able to make him any adequate requital ; or to grieve at his misfortunes, which no otherwise affect him than by exciting sympathetic sorrow.

row. In such instances as these there appears a love to the happiness of others as a good desirable and delightful in itself, and not merely profitable and subservient to self-interest, and consequently such a love as cannot be educed from and resolved into self-love. Which was to be proved.

Scholium. Many things are loved partly as delightful in themselves, and partly as useful. The welfare of our friends may be desired on both these accounts. So may reputation, honours, authority, and even riches; for some appear to have a fondness for them distinct from what arises from their apprehended usefulness. But that love which terminates in it's object as in itself delightful can never be resolved into self-love or a love of our own happiness; and however it may be joined or compounded with a value for the same object as useful, it is in it's nature as intirely and essentially different from it, as the love I have for any food as pleasant, is different from the love I have for it as wholesome. *

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* When a person who has been pleased with the singing of a bird, or frightened with a rattle snake, is delighted or disgusted at the sight of their pictures, this does not arise from self-love. (See Edwards on the nature of true Virtue, pag. 155.) It is not self-love but a particular taste that is the immediate subjective ground of that pleasure we have by seeing and hearing a beautiful singing bird. Nor is it strange if the same taste should be somewhat gratified by a lively idea of the same object. The abhorrence we conceive upon having the lively idea of noxious animals, with which we have been greatly terrified, so far as it is not founded in natural antipathy, seems to be a good deal analogous to the nausea excited at the smell and taste of food which has caused a crapula. This seems to arise from some habitual alteration in the state of the stomach, and organs of taste and smell. That may arise from an abiding change in the brain or nerves occasioned by the fright. There is, I doubt not, a physical cause of both. What it is I leave to the naturalists.

More arguments might be offered to the same purpose, and whatever has been urged in opposition hereto (so far as it has fallen under my notice) might easily be answered, if it were proper to divert to a more thorough discussion of this famous question. But though this seems unnecessary, it may not be amiss to add, that it will not follow from any thing that has here been pleaded for, that mankind have naturally a principle of true holiness, nor does it enervate the proofs of mans natural depravity from scripture and experience. But truth scorns to be beholden to error for it's support, and human nature corrupt as it is may be misrepresented and belied.

Our next enquiry, namely, whether self-love in the unregenerate is selfishness, and whether all actions flowing from self-love are selfish, and flow from a selfish principle, is now to be briefly attended to. Now though it be true that all who have self-love without any good will to others are selfish persons, yet it is not self-love simply that is selfishness, or that constitutes any one a selfish person. The exclusion of good will to others is essentially contained in the idea of selfishness, as has just been noted. This is a very important part of the idea, which is not included in self-love. When this vicious defect, is conjoined with self-love in our conception, the idea is changed from what it was before, and the name expressing it must be changed also. It is not self-love that is selfishness, nor is it the want of love to others, but both together. Divide a whole into parts, and neither one part nor the other taken by itself is the whole.

If it should be supposed that men naturally act from meer self-love, it would not follow that they acted from a selfish principle. An action does not flow from selfishness unless want of love to others as well as love to ourselves be a formal principle ; so as
that

that what is done should be an expression or evidence of the former, as well as the latter. When a man does that to promote his own interest which is in his apprehension inconsistent with the interest of others, his action flows from selfishness; it takes it's form from the want of love to others, as well as from love to himself. If he had regarded the welfare of others he would have done otherwise. But when a man aims at his own welfare in such a way as is consistent with the welfare of others, self-love is the principle he acts from; it is from this his action takes it's form, and not at all from the want of love to others. It is an expression of good will to himself, it is no expression of want of love to others. Whether he had regarded the welfare of others or not, he would have done the very same that he has done. Suppose he has no regard to the interest of others, he is then a selfish man. Suppose what he does interferes with the interest of others in his apprehension, and so is an expression and evidence of want of love to them as well as of love to himself, it then flows from selfishness, that is, it flows from want of love to others, as well as from self-love. But suppose what he does be profitable to himself, and consistent with the interest of others, then meer self-love is the formal principle. The want of love to others has no influence in the case.

It may seem strange to those who are unacquainted with metaphysics, that a defect or privation should be spoken of as a formal principle, which has an influence in it's kind into an action. To open this matter fully would carry us too great a length into some abstruse disquisitions. Though privative causes (as they are called) have no positive or physical influence in determining the acts of the will, yet the formality of actions has a dependance upon them; and actions are very often denominated from them. The foolishness

ishness of an agent, though a meer defect, is though not a physical, yet a logical cause, and formal principle of a foolish action; which action is denominated foolish, not merely because it is the act of a foolish man, but because it is an expression of folly, taking its form as foolish from this defect in the agent. The same observations may be applied to selfish actions.

An action flowing merely from self-love is not therefore a selfish action, according to the common and proper signification of the word, unless it interferes with the interest of others, and so is an expression and evidence of a vicious defect of good will to them. It is properly an *interested* action. There is according to the general acceptation of words, the same difference between an interested and a selfish action, as there is between self-love and selfishness. Self-love is the principle of the former, selfishness of the latter.

These observations may appear to some more subtil, than useful. Perhaps we shall find before we have done, that it is of more importance than presently appears, to have our words and ideas as determinate as possible in reasoning on such points as are before us.

To return from this long digression. If an unregenerate sinner may have any just reason to think, that his reforming his life, and attending the means of grace tends to his benefit in any respect, self-love will be a prompting principle to such a conduct; and that in some proportion to the clearness of his conviction hereof, and the strength of his love to himself, and his own happiness.

4. There are other affections and inclinations natural to mankind, which may influence them to a reformation and an attendance on the common means of grace. The natural disposition in men to be pleased in being loved and honoured, and uneasy in being
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the objects of contempt and abhorrence, tends to excite them to the practice of those virtues which are of good report, and restrain from a dissolute life censured by mankind. This pleasure and trouble though private does not flow from self-love, as some have imagined ; but from a particular inclination of human nature. For a consciousness of being beloved by others, is in itself delightful to us, and the contrary grievous. But (as has been shewn) love to ourselves and our own happiness will never cause us to delight in any particular object for it's own sake, but only as a means, and for the sake of a further end. Other particular affections and instincts might be mentioned tending to restrain men from a profligate life, and dispose them to a contrary behavior, which I omit. Yet I cannot forbear mentioning that inquisitive turn of mind, that thirst after knowledge, for which some are remarkable, and all I suppose have something of it, by which many are prompted to seek after divine knowledge, and search for it in the use of means as for hid treasure. Many who have no principle of true holiness take a real pleasure in searching the scriptures, informing their minds with a doctrinal knowledge of the principles of christian religion, and the evidences of it's divine authority, in attending on divine ordinances, &c. There is a mental taste inclining hereto, which is distinct from self-love, though this may have a joint influence with it.

From the whole it appears that the unregenerate are furnished with such principles of action, as with the advantages of instruction from the word of God, by the common influence of his Spirit, are sufficient to enable them to reform their lives, and attend the common means of grace. They have a principle or next power from which by mere moral suasion such acts of will may be educed.

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Mr. H's sentiments on the general subject hitherto treated of are expressed in the following words.

“ The unregenerate sinner is under no kind of inability or difficulty that is in the way of his turning to God immediately, which the open profligate is not under as a bar in the way of his reforming his conduct immediately. In the latter case all the difficulty lies in the corruption of his heart, and the opposition of his will to it, and this is all the difficulty in the former. And if it is more difficult for a sinner to turn to God through Jesus Christ with his whole heart than it is for him to forsake all ways of known sin in his external conduct, and he is under a greater inability to do the former than the latter, it is wholly because his will opposes the former more than it does the latter, or rather because the latter may be complied with consistent with the indulgence of the reigning wickedness of the heart, and enmity against God, whereas the former cannot. The reason why the open profligate does not reform his conduct immediately is, because he is not willing, or his heart opposes this. And the only reason why the awakened sinner does not embrace the gospel immediately, but remains obstinately impenitent, is because his will even his whole heart opposes it. All the difference is, that in the latter case the opposition of the heart to Jesus Christ is more fixed and strong than it is in the former case to an external reformation, as an external reformation may be complied with consistent with the gratification of the reigning lusts of the heart : But compliance with the gospel cannot.”*

As this way of representing the inability of fallen man has lately crept into vogue with some other *ingenious*

ingenious writers, besides our author, who seem to look upon it as an important and happy discovery, it may not be amiss to propose some brief observations in answer to these two enquiries.

Wherein consists the inability or difficulty which obstructs the reformation of the profligate, and the conversion of the unregenerate?

Is the inability or difficulty in both cases of the same kind?

To the first I say, that by the acknowledgment of all there is no such inability in either case as consists in the want of strength in the natural faculties either to reform, or turn to God. There is no want of primary power necessary to these purposes, either in the profligate or unregenerate. The profligate is also furnished with such natural principles or habitual springs of action, as are capable of being wrought upon by persuasives, so as that he may without the infusion of supernatural habits be prevailed with to "*forsake the ways of known sin in his external conduct.*" The obstructions in the way of his reformation are his relish for the pleasures of sin, the external difficulties and opposition which must be overcome if he changes his course: To which we must add ignorance, or error of judgment, in respect of the advantage of reforming his life, and the destructive tendency of a profligate course, and in consequence of this an unwillingness to reform. But by means of instruction and motives, his mistaken apprehensions may be rectified, and such a willingness and resolution to reform his life may without the infusion of any supernatural principle be excited, as shall overpower all these obstructions. It may then be truly said that it is in his power to reform. All that is wanting is that this power be drawn forth into act by exhortations and moral inducements. He has *natural facul-*

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ties and habits whence such acts of will may be educed as are implied in a reformation of his external conduct.

The inability of the unregenerate to turn to God immediately consists in his unregeneracy. That is, the want of a principle of true holiness, a secondary power, or next capacity of being persuaded by motives and arguments to turn from sin to God, as has been declared at large.

To the other enquiry, viz. Whether the inability of the profligate to reform his life be of the same kind with the inability of the unregenerate to turn to God? I answer, it seems very plain that it is not. For,

(1.) The profligate has a real and proper ability to reform his life, being endowed with natural faculties, and habitual principles sufficient for this purpose, but the unregenerate are really and truly unable, (as destitute of a principle of holiness) to perform acts of holy obedience.

The profligate is as really able to reform his life as Adam was to maintain his integrity, or as a regenerate person is to comply with any of the precepts of the gospel. Adam had a power to obey the law of his creation. He had natural faculties, and concreated principles of righteousness. The regenerate have also a power for acts of spiritual obedience communicated to them by the holy Spirit. And mankind in general have it in their power to abstain from acts of open wickedness and practise external duties. There may be a power sufficient for an action, and yet the action may never be done. There may be a natural faculty and habitual principle, and yet they may never be excited, or put forth to action. The proper use of moral suasion is to work upon those powers and springs

springs of action which are within us, to put them in motion, or wake them up to their proper exercises.

But the unregenerate have not a next power or principle of holy exercises. Mere moral suasion is insufficient to prevail with them to turn to God with all their hearts, until a new heart is created in them. They have not the same kind of power herefor that Adam had to obey the law of his creation. They have not the same kind of power that the regenerate have to turn to God. They have not the same kind of power that men have to do common actions. Adam had such a power as implied an habitual principle of righteousness, so have the regenerate. But this is wanting in the unregenerate.

When men have natural faculties and habitual principles, implying an immediate capacity of being wrought upon merely by the proposal of motives, unwillingness to act is very improperly called inability; or however it is an inability of a very different kind from that which consists in the want of *habitual principles*. The profligate is unwilling to reform, but by instructions and exhortations he may be persuaded to it without having any new principle infused into him. The unregenerate are not only unwilling to perform acts of holy obedience, but are destitute of a secondary power herefor, which no instructions or exhortations can furnish them with, without the special and immediate influence of the divine Spirit. *

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* To what has been before remarked concerning the distinction of natural and moral inability, I will here add a brief note for the further elucidation of this matter.

Divines have taken occasion to speak of three kinds of inability in man with respect to supposed actions. First, When the action supposed exceeds the strength of the active *faculty* in it's present state, this is called simply *natural inability*. Thus man is naturally unable to fly above the clouds, to create a world, to comprehend

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2. That inability which consists essentially in unregeneracy, or is inseparably connected with it, is different in kind from that which does not consist in unregeneracy, and has only an accidental connection with it. The impotency of the unregenerate to turn to God with all their hearts, consists in unregeneracy, or the want of a principle of holiness or next power for holy

comprehend the nature or works of God. Secondly, When an action which does not exceed the strength of our natural faculties has a necessary dependence upon, and flows from some preceding act of the will, as an effect from its cause, this preceding and causal act of will has been considered as a *power* with relation to the subsequent act flowing from it; and the want of *this* has been called an *inability* with respect thereto. *Unwillingness* has in this case been termed *moral inability*. When this unwillingness takes place in a soul furnished with a principle whence the *causal act* before mentioned may by instructions and motives be educed, it is then simply *moral inability*, and is removed by moral suasion alone, without communicating any new principles. But Thirdly, When the principle or habit whence the supposed act must flow is wanting, and it is not in the power of the will to acquire it, but it must be communicated and infused by the divine Spirit (as is the case with the unregenerate with respect to acts of true holiness) this constitutes a third kind of inability which has not unfrequently been called *Ethico-physical*. A man is under a natural inability to read the scriptures, if he be blind. He is under a moral inability to do so, if he be unwilling when he is immediately capable of doing it. But he is under an *Ethico-physical* inability to discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner, and turn to God with all his heart, while he is unregenerate. Many others of late, besides Mr. H. have confounded these two latter kinds of inability together under the name of moral inability, contrary to the received language of the scriptures and sound divines; though the distinction between them be as important and necessary, as the distinction between the want of power and the want of will; which has introduced vast confusion, perplexity, inconsistency, and impertinence into their discourses. Hence we have seen some (who appear to discourse very sensibly upon other points) that when they come to speak of the inability of fallen man, think that all difficulties are

holy exercifes. But our author owns that an external reformation is confiftent with a ftate of unregeneracy ; and confequently a power to reform is confiftent with fuch a ftate. What obftructs the reformation of the profligate may be removed without regeneration. It is not unregeneracy, but fomething entirely diverfe and feperable from it. The inability then is not in both cafes of the fame kind.

3. If the profligate finner were under the fame kind of inability to reform, that the unregenerate finner is under to repent and turn to God with all his heart, then the fame kind of operation of divine grace which is neceffary to the converfion of the unregenerate would alfo be neceffary to the reformation of the profligate : And the fame kind of means which are fufficient to reform the profligate, would be fufficient to convert the unregenerate. There can be no need of a different kind of divine influence to remove an obftruction or inability of the fame kind. Now it is acknowledged that the unwillingnefs of the profligate to reform his life may be removed by moral fuafion alone, without communicating to him a new fupernatural principle. But will Mr. H. fay that moral fuafion alone, without communicating a new principle, is fufficient to enable and perfuade an unregenerate finner to turn to God ? Yet this is the unavoidable

are clearly and fufficiently folved, by faying that it is a moral inability, or want of will to do their duty. And common fenfe declares that unwillingnefs is no excufe. But indeed this does not touch the core of the matter. If mankind are born with a principle or habit fitting and difpofing them, upon the propofal of motives and occafions, for acts of holy obedience no pelagian will plead unwillingnefs as any excufe of difobedience. But if this habit be wanting, and cannot be created by any act of our will, then the inability of man confifts in a want of *power to will, prior to any volitions whatever.*

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able consequence of that leading and favourite principle of his, *That the reason why the profligate remains unreformed, is the same in kind with the reason why the unregenerate remain impenitent, viz. opposition of will; ALL THE DIFFERENCE lying in this, that in the latter case the opposition is more fixed and strong than in the former.* But if this be *all the difference*, then it lies only in the degree, and the *stronger degree* of renitency in the will may as well be overcome by presenting *stronger motives*, or setting them in a *stronger light* in the view of the mind, as a weaker may by a weaker energy of moral suasion. And if moral suasion alone can overcome the *strength* of this opposition for one moment, then the *fixedness* of it may be fully remedied by *fixing* and *holding* the motives in the view of the understanding.

That which seems to have deceived our author and others in their reasonings, is the ambiguity of the word will; which signifies both the power and the act of willing; and confounding simple moral inability, consisting in unwillingness, with that inability which is termed by divines *ethico physical*, consisting in the want of a principle or next power to will.

The inability of the profligate to reform, so far as it consists in unwillingness, is simple moral inability; and is not properly and upon the whole any impotency at all, so long as the mind is furnished with a principle or next power to will and do whatever is implied in his reformation, and only needs to have this power excited and drawn forth into acts by instruction and motives.

But the inability of the unregenerate to repent and turn to God, lies in the want of a secondary power to will, which he is truly and properly unable to produce or create in his own soul, nor can it be produced by motives alone, because it does not consist in, or flow from

from any act of his will, but must be communicated and infused by the immediate agency of the holy Spirit, creating in him a new heart. If a sinner's inability for holy acts consisted in his unwillingness for them, or the opposition of his will to them, then it would not consist in his unregeneracy. For unregeneracy does not lie in any actings of the will, or in the privation of any acts, but in the privation of a principle of holiness. To say that the *only reason* why a sinner does not embrace the gospel is because his heart opposes it, is the same as to say that his rejecting the gospel is the only reason why he rejects it, which is false and absurd. *It is false*, for it implies that there is no want of a holy principle. If a power to will were wanting, this defect would be a bar in the way of a sinner's conversion, of much greater moment than mere unwillingness, which if that were all might be removed by moral suasion. If unwillingness, or opposite actings of will are the *only reason* why a sinner does not embrace the gospel, unregeneracy or the want of a principle of holiness is *no reason*; and consequently regeneration (as distinguished from conversion) removes *no cause* of impenitency. Again, the impleaded principle is palpably *absurd*. Opposition of heart or will to the gospel is refusing to embrace it, or rejecting it. But who can help *feeling* the absurdity of saying that, "*the only reason why men refuse to embrace the gospel, is because they refuse to embrace it?*" That is, this *act of will* either has no cause or reason of it's existence, or else it is the cause or reason of itself. And this shews the futility and impropriety of such kind of assertions which some have been so fond of, "The unregenerate can repent and turn to God if they will—There is nothing hinders but their own obstinate unwillingness, or want of will." Willing to repent in the sense here intended,

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tended, is a holy change of will : In one word, it is true repentance. The matter then comes to this, He that does repent, can repent ! The important use of this sage maxim to reconcile the gospel with common sense seems to be a modern discovery, " He " that is wiser for this may rejoice in it."

I agree with our author that the inability of the unregenerate is a sinful defect, nor have I the remotest view or desire to weaken the foundation of this important truth, but rather to confirm it. But I must say, that Mr. H. with sundry others, how well soever they may have deserved of the christian church on other accounts, have on this point (as I am verily persuaded) darkned counsel by words without knowledge. To point out the impropriety of these new-fangled phrases and notions, with which some are so enamoured, with the fallacious reasonings and conclusions issuing from them, is an important service to the cause of truth to which christians seem to be particularly called at this day. If any man speak let him speak as the oracles of God.

The next point proposed to consideration, is now to be attended to, and may be stated in the following manner.

Allowing that men have a power or principle, whereby they are capable of reforming their lives, and attending the means of grace, as has been declared and pleaded for ; yet human nature is totally depraved. Are not natural principles then utterly sinful ? And must not all exercises of such principles be utterly sinful ?

For the resolution of this point let it be observed, that we allow the depravity of human nature, yea the total depravity, as taught in scripture, and in the reformed churches, in opposition to the pelagian and semipelagian doctrine. We allow that all the principles

ples of human nature in it's unrenewed state are corrupted by sin, that it is destitute of a principle of true holiness, and in a state of spiritual death. But we must carefully distinguish between natural principles considered simply in themselves, and the corruption of them. The corruption of human nature consists essentially and radically in a defect or privation of a principle of true holiness, not in the infusion of any principles positively and in their own nature evil. Natural principles when subsisting and operating alone, un subordinate to a principle of holiness, are corrupt, because destitute of a due perfection which they ought to have. Hence they are sometimes called positive principles of sin; and indeed properly enough, if we understand sin in the concrete sense: For every act of the soul must flow from some positive principle, though sinfulness in the abstract flows only from a privative cause, as is commonly noted by divines. Thus selfishness is a corrupt principle, and a positive principle of selfish actions; yet there is nothing properly positive in selfishness but the natural useful and innocent principle of self-love. Human nature with it's principles may be considered simply in itself, so it is the work of God; and therefore not evil but good. It may also be considered as divested by the sin of man of it's primitive moral perfection, and thereby incapacitated to answer the great end of it's creation: So it is depraved and evil. But though depraved nature implies something positive, yet the depravity of nature consists properly not in any thing positive, but in a meer privation of it's due moral perfection.

That natural principles so far as they denote any thing properly positive are not evil, may be demonstrated various ways. God is the proper efficient cause of our nature, and of every thing positive be-
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longing to it : But he is not the efficient cause of evil, as all christians not only allow but contend. Moreover, there is a real positive concurring influence of almighty God with our natural principles in all their operations ; but surely it is inconsistent with the divine purity to excite and actuate any principle that is in itself essentially evil, supposing it were possible (as it is not) that such a principle did really exist. The holy Spirit works upon the natural principles of the unregenerate altogether in awakening and humbling them, and exciting them to attend upon the means of grace ; which would be directly instigating them to sin, as sin, if these principles and their operations were in themselves simply evil. And finally if natural principles were positively evil, the operations of divine grace would tend to destroy them ; but it is only the disorder introduced by sin that is removed in sanctification.

Though moral depravity has spread over every part of human nature that is capable of it, yet not every thing in human nature is moral depravity. The distinction between *natural principles* and the *corruption* of them is of great importance ; and it would be much better to endeavour to set this in the plainest light possible, than to heap up cloudy loose expressions of total depravity, enmity, selfishness, and the like, as the manner of some has been, and then to draw such strange conclusions as that all acts flowing from mere natural principles must of necessity be acts of enmity against God, i. e. sins of commission, positively repugnant to the divine command. But if we will conceive aright of this matter we may maintain, that though natural principles, separate from and un subordinate to a principle of holiness are depraved, yet in themselves they are good lawful and useful. And though the want of a principle of holiness deprives

prives every act flowing from mere natural principles of that perfection which is necessary to constitute it a holy action, which *defect* is contrary to the divine law, yet the want of a holy principle does not always and necessarily cause an act flowing from mere natural principles to be *in itself* contrary to the divine command : And consequently the sin adhering to it, *does not consist in what is done*, but rather *in the defect of some circumstance* which ought to have attended it : That is, it lies in omission rather than commission. Though the sinful omission or defect whereby the act is corrupted flows from the depravity of human nature, yet the *act itself* does not *in any sense*, nor is any exercise or expression thereof.

But this matter must be further opened and discussed, which I shall endeavour to do as plainly as I can, by examining that famous question, which has been so long and so much debated in the church, concerning the virtuous actions (as they are called) of the unregenerate. Whether, and in what sense they are sin ? Whether and in what respect they are good ? Here observe, that the point to be enquired into is not, whether any actions of the unregenerate are holy, either in a legal or evangelical acceptation ? It is plain they are not. Nor whether they are not, taken in all their circumstances sinful, and in this view may be termed sins ? This is granted. Nor whether they are meritorious of grace either in a way of condignity or congruity ? This we do not pretend. And finally, we do not suppose that there are any promises of salvation, or regenerating grace to the doings of the unregenerate ; but God acts with sovereign liberty in the exercises of his mercy. The question then is, *Are the best actions of the unregenerate properly denominated good in any respect, and is there any moral goodness in them ?* By moral goodness is here meant
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any kind or degree of conformity to the law in *any respect*; though there should not be that intireness of conformity in *all necessary respects* which is implied in true holiness.

The full examination of this question would carry us into the bowels of our main controversy, which is reserved for the subject of the two following sections. But without anticipating I would observe——

In the first place, The best actions of the unregenerate are useful, both to themselves and to mankind in general. They are often subservient, by the blessing of God, to their temporal and eternal good—and the neglect of them, with a contrary behaviour, is sinful, of pernicious tendency, and oftentimes of fatal consequence.

And as the good works of believers which are seen of men are to the glory of God, so are the externally good works of the unregenerate, when done in professed obedience to him. The inward principle of holiness is visible only to the searcher of hearts. The want of it therefore cannot hide the light shining from a good conversation, in the sight of mankind, by beholding of which they may be induced to glorify God. Therefore,

Secondly, There is a goodness in outward acts of religious obedience, separate from the goodness of the inward principle of action, or the immanent exercises of love to God and man. Actions externally good are by the acknowledgment of all, the proper exercises, and fit expressions of a good heart. Now whatever act is a proper expression of a good heart, is in itself good abstract from the goodness of temper therein exercised and expressed; otherwise there would be no correspondence or answerableness of the expression with the thing expressed. Beneficent action is a proper way of expressing love; because beneficence

ficence is in itself good and amiable, and therefore love prompts and disposes men to such a behaviour. A good man inclines to and takes complacency in a good behaviour. His goodness causes him to do so. But if there were no goodness in the outward act of beneficence, except what consisted in the inward exercise of love; then it would be perfectly indifferent whether love operated in this way, or in a conduct directly the reverse. If good actions are not in themselves better than bad ones, apart from the consideration of their principle; why should a good principle dispose a man to the one rather than the other? But if there be such a difference in the nature of human actions, that some are properly denominated good, and others evil in respect of their substance; which goodness or evil does not lie in their causes and principles; then there is a goodness in the best actions of the unregenerate, however destitute they are of a principle of holiness.

Thirdly, If the object of choice be good, as viewed and chosen by the mind; then the act of the will in choosing it is in itself good. The act of our will is indeed distinct from those effects which flow from it by the laws of nature; such as the motion of our own or other bodies, in consequence of the exertion of our souls. And it is possible for a man by accident to do that which may prove of advantage to himself and others, when he acts with the most mischievous intention. In this case we say the action as chosen and done by the agent is bad, though good has come of it contrary to his will. But when a good effect naturally flowing from the act of a man's will is foreseen and chosen as such; then the act of choosing is in itself good, as well as the object chosen, or the effect flowing from it. Nor is the matter at all affected in a rational, and moral consideration, whether the
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person were the immediate efficient cause of the good effect, or only an occasional one. Actions materially good are no doubt (if we speak properly) the actions of our souls, and not any external effects as detached from the agency of the will. The substance or matter of an act of choice is to be denominated good or evil, according to the nature of it's object, as viewed and chosen by the mind. However defective the prime principles or ultimate ends of action may be, the choice of an action materially good is an act of choice materially good. And if there be any goodness in some external actions more than in others, which ought to incline a good man to take delight in them; then there is a goodness in the choice of such kind of actions: There is a goodness in the effective act of the will, separate from the goodness of the immanent act, or of the habit or principle from which the immanent act flows. If there be no goodness in effective acts of the will, except what consists in the goodness of the principles they flow from; then a principle of holiness would no more fit dispose and prompt the soul to such kind of acts than to the very reverse. A sanctified heart which has a right judgment and taste approves of and inclines to such kind of acts: They are the proper exercises of a good principle; which is a clear evidence of their goodness in themselves. Our choice of objects is not that which makes them good, but their goodness is the ground and reason of our choosing them, as it is this which makes them fit objects of choice. As the *effects* flowing from an act of will are what they are in themselves whether good or evil, whatever the design of the agent might be, so the *effective acts* themselves are what they are in respect of their substance, from whatever principles they might flow. In this sense it is a *true* principle,

“ that

“ that the goodness or evil of actions lies in their nature
“ and not in their causes.” *

Now when the unregenerate perform actions materially good, the external effect, and the internal act of the mind chusing the action, and exerting effective power for the performance of it, are the same in their own nature, as if they acted from a principle of true holiness. And since such kind of actions are good in themselves, abstract from the goodness of their principle, the want of a holy principle does not deprive them of *this kind of goodness* whatever it may be.

But here it will naturally be enquired, what kind of goodness this is which belongs to external actions or effective acts as considered in themselves, abstract from their principles? I answer first, *the usefulness or good tendency of such actions*: Their connection with and conduciveness to such ends as are ultimately good. Philosophers have distributed good into three kinds, *bonum honestum, jucundum, & utile*. Moral good, happiness, and that which is profitable, on account of it's instrumental subserviency to the attainment of virtue or happiness. The goodness of the end derives a goodness to the means conducing to it. In this sense at least the best actions of the unregenerate cannot be denied to be good, by any that allow them to be any ways conducive to their benefit. I add secondly, If such actions are required in and by any divine command, if effective as well as immanent acts of the will are jointly and severally subject to the law, then it must be allowed that there is a moral goodness, in the sense before explained, in such actions; that is, there is an agreement with the rule of duty, in the substance of the action, though such an imperfect kind of conformity as cannot be denominated true holiness. And yet it is such a kind of

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* Edwards's Enquiry concerning the Will, part 4. sect. 1.

moral goodness, that the want of it is *in itself* really and essentially sin. This supposition is denied and exploded by Mr. H. and that (as his manner is) with high contempt of all that hold to it, as "*persons who do not exercise their reason, but confuse and bewilder themselves with a set of words without ideas.*" We will in due time try the weight of his arguments; and so leave it to the reader, when he shall see the issue of the controversy in hand, to resolve this point for himself; which he will then, I hope, be able to do without any trouble.

All that I shall add at present is a brief enquiry concerning the *ends of unregenerate sinners in their best actions*. Here, as some suppose, is the hardest knot of all. For if it should be granted that natural principles of action are in themselves good, or however not unlawful; and that such actions may flow from them as are materially good, that is useful, and answerable to the divine precept as to their substance, as has been declared; yet surely it must not be said that men are allowed, and much less required by God to do any action, however good in itself, for a bad end. Now it is supposed that the unregenerate always act for a wrong end; which since it is forbidden, their acting at all, while unregenerate seems to be forbidden by necessary consequence. Though the *To actum* should be allowed to be good in some respects, yet the *To agere* seems in this case to be evil and unlawful. But it will require no very strong finger to untie this knot, if what has been already laid down be remembered, and necessary distinctions attended to.

The end of an action is that for the sake of which the action is done. And this may be said to be irregular and wrong in two different respects. *First*, when what is sought for is absolutely forbidden. In this case we are not allowed to act at all in order to such

may be in any Respects lawful and good. 91

an end, even though the means in themselves considered may be lawful. Thus it was abominable in Jezebel to proclaim a fast, that under the cloke of zeal for reformation she might murder Naboth. It was vile treachery in Judas to kiss his Lord in order to betray him. *Secondly*, The end of an action is irregular and wrong when it is defective, though in itself not absolutely forbidden. Here we must carefully distinguish between the end in itself, and the corruption or irregularity of it. When what a man seeks for is good, his end is good in itself. But if he pursues this end in opposition to a greater good, to which it ought to be subordinate, his end is wrong; not because an object in itself forbidden is sought, but because a greater good is neglected. To do a forbidden action, or aim at a forbidden end is always unlawful. So it is to neglect a commanded action, or not to direct our actions to the glory of God, which ought to be our governing end: But it is not unlawful in itself to do an action materially good for an inferior end, if the pursuit of such an end be not forbidden.

When men act in order to obtain a forbidden end, we grant that their acting at all in this case is directly repugnant to the command of God. The choice of such an end is in itself positively opposite to the divine will: It is a sin of commission: It is an act materially evil; and is in no case commanded allowed or encouraged by God. Thus if a man should utter the words of a prayer, with a malicious intent to mock God, and profane his ordinances; such an action would be in itself horribly wicked. To act at all with such a design would be an exercise of contempt and enmity against God.

But the unregenerate do not always act for such ends as are in themselves forbidden, and unlawful, though the ends of their actions are always essentially

defective. For a man to strive to escape misery is to act for a reasonable and lawful end ; unless it be a duty to desire misery, or at least to be unconcerned about it. If a man has no other aim or desire than to secure his own happiness, his end is defective and irregular. But the fault does not lie in his seeking a forbidden object, but in neglecting and refusing to aim at the glory of God therein. To desire and seek our own happiness is not directly and positively repugnant to the divine command : It is no sin of commission : It is not materially evil. When we seek our own happiness unubordinate to the glory of God, our end is indeed irregular and inconformable to the divine command. This irregularity lies in the privation of a supreme regard to God. Unsubordinateness is a relative denomination, importing only the defect of a superior governing principle and end. The want of a pious regard to God is a sin of omission. The actual and positive rejection of God and his honor, when proposed as the ultimate end of our action is a sin of commission, and may be termed an exercise of enmity against him. But a disregard to God, and forsaking him are in their own nature intirely distinct from a regard to our own happiness, and an endeavour to secure and promote it.

There is evidently, in the judgment of common sense, a broad difference, between acting for an unlawful end, and acting for an end lawful in itself, though unubordinate to a higher one. If a man gives money to his poor neighbour to hire him to murder his enemy, he is himself a murderer. If he does it in hopes of a temporal reward, it does not appear that the action or end is in itself unlawful, though both are sinfully defective if he aims at nothing higher. In the former case the action is an exercise of enmity ; in the latter it is an exercise of meer self-love. By
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refraining to act for an unlawful end, we refrain from sin ; but no sin is avoided by forbearing to act for a subordinate lawful end. If it were possible for a man to divest himself intirely of self-love, or suspend all it's exercises ; the want of love to God, or aversion of heart from him would be as vicious, as if the man was seeking his own happiness un subordinate to the divine glory.

It is as I conceive through inattention to the distinctions above proposed, between natural principles and the corruption of them, between forbidden and defective ends, that Mr. H. has been deceived in his reasonings and conclusions. He supposes that all exercises of the unregenerate are acts of enmity against God, because they are carnally minded, and the carnal mind is enmity against God. And before acts of enmity are forever unlawful. The unavoidable consequence of which is that it is utterly unlawful for men to act at all from natural principles. But this is mere fallacy. Actions may flow from principles that are corrupt, and yet not flow from their corruption, so not be any *exercise* or *expression* of moral corruption. A man acting merely from self-love may do actions which are not selfish but interested. An action is not selfish, or an exercise of selfishness, unless a disregard of the good of others, as well as self love, has an influence into it as a *formal principle*, and is therein expressed ; which is never the case unless self-interest is supposed to interfere with the interest of others. An action is not an exercise of moral depravity, unless moral depravity be the cause of a man's doing it ; so that his conduct would have been the reverse if he had not been morally depraved. An action is not an exercise of enmity against God, unless enmity to God be the cause and formal principle of it ; so that it would not have been
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been done unless the agent had hated God. Now it is plain there are many actions flowing from natural principles, and directed to inferior ends, which being un subordinate to a holy principle and end, are therefore privatively corrupt ; which actions, though destitute of that conformity to the divine law in respect of principle and end which is implied in true holiness, do not take their form from the corruption of their principle or end, but from that in or belonging thereto, which is lawful and good : And consequently, whatever sinfulness adheres to such action, lies in the *omission* of some requisite qualification, and not in any *actual* and *positive repugnancy* of the *act itself* to the divine law. This omission indeed may be said, in some sense, to flow from the corruption of human nature ; but the act itself does not, nor is any exercise or expression of it. What I mean may be better understood perhaps when illustrated by a familiar similitude. A young child who has not wisdom to judge what is good for himself, may to gratify his appetite eat what is unwholesome ; and he may to gratify his appetite eat what is wholesome as well as pleasant. In both cases he acts without wisdom, following his appetite. But when he eats what is unwholesome, his want of wisdom is, though not a physical, yet a proper logical cause of his action ; because notwithstanding his appetite if he had been wise he would not have done it. And therefore his foolishness in conjunction with his natural appetite is the formal principle of his action ; which action *takes its form from*, and is an *effect* or *expression* of folly as well as natural appetite. His natural appetite is the proper positive principle of the *action* ; his want of wisdom is the proper privative cause of the *foolishness* of it. But when a child to gratify his appetite eats what is both pleasant and wholesome, though he
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acts without wisdom, yet want of wisdom is not the formal principle of his action; it is not a cause or reason in any sense of his doing what he does. His action is no exercise or expression of folly, but merely of natural appetite. Though he acts from mere appetite, his action is agreeable to the rules of wisdom. If he knew what was good for himself he would do the very same. In this case neither wisdom nor folly, but natural appetite is the *logical, physical, formal* principle of his action.

Thus when a man in order to promote his supposed interest acts in opposition to the rules of piety and humanity, the want of a due regard to God and his neighbour is in conjunction with self-love, the logical cause and formal principle of his conduct; which therefore is an exercise and expression of moral depravity, as well as natural self-love. But when a sinner does any action materially good from mere self-love, in hopes that it will be to his advantage; in this case the action does not flow, or take it's form, from the corruption of human nature. It does not flow from enmity against God and his neighbour, nor from want of love, nor from want of an habitual principle disposing to exercises of love; but from that natural lawful and useful principle, implanted within us by God, whereby we incline to our own happiness. The end here aimed at is not supposed to be inconsistent with the good of the universe: His design is not to hurt others, but to advantage himself. Such an action can with no propriety be called an exercise of enmity to God or man; because however averse the heart of the sinner may be from God and man at the time of acting; yet it is not enmity, but mere self-love that disposes and determines him to such a conduct. A change of heart would no otherwise change the actings of his will in this case, than
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By joining the influence of a new governing principle with those natural principles which operated before. The act itself is not enmity or hatred of God ; for it is an act materially good, by the supposition ; for instance, attending to the means of instruction. The formal principle is not enmity but self-love. How much enmity soever there may be in the heart, it has no more positive and prompting influence into this action, than it has in the action of a sucking infant that reaches earnestly for the breast. And the action of such an infant might as truly and properly be called an exercise of enmity to being in general, as the action of a sinner in the case supposed.

Man in his depraved state is an enemy to God. He is fallen under the dominion of sin. The principles and exercises of his heart *are not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*, so long as he is *in and after the flesh*, as the apostle speaks ; that is, so long as he is unregenerate. His heart is alienated from God and his holy law : All his actions are inconformable to the rule of duty. This alienation of heart from God, with that actual disobedience which flows from it, being in itself and in it's natural tendency dishonourary to God, is termed *constructive* enmity to God, which is implied in all sin ; which yet is to be distinguished from that *actual* and *direct* rising of the heart against the divine majesty which is usually termed *hatred of God*. This is a sin of commission, implying not only some knowledge of God, but an actual exercise of the mind in thinking on his character with aversion. That is implied in every omission of duty ; it is chargeable on sinners who know not God and have him not in their thoughts : It does not necessarily imply any actual exercise of the soul at all. Enmity most properly signifies an affection or act of the soul contrary to love. *To be carnally*

carnally minded, says the apostle, is enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7. That which is here termed enmity, is not the carnal heart, or depraved nature, the principle of corrupt exercises; (as many have supposed, being deceived perhaps by the ambiguous word *mind*) but it is *Phroneema Sarkos*, which expresses the actual exercise of the mind and heart *as depraved*, as is commonly remarked by critics.* It signifies the same with the *lusting of the flesh*, which the apostle elsewhere speaks of. But though the exercises and actings of natural principles *as corrupted by sin*, are inconformable to the law of God, and so are constructively at least enmity against God, since they are at best destitute of that rectitude and holiness of principle and end which the law requires; yet in actions materially good the sinfulness adhering does not consist *in the exercise* but *in the privation of right principles and ends in acting*: It is the omission of duty, not the perpetration of a forbidden act. Take this exercise of the natural principle intirely away, and the sinfulness of the person remains undiminished. The law of sin, as the apostle terms it, does not in this case operate by a formal influence into the substance of the action, but by depriving it of those qualifications which are necessary to constitute it spiritually good.

Some have seemed to think that natural affections (self-love for instance) when un subordinate to general benevolence, are *in themselves* acts of opposition, or enmity to being in general. For such an affection (it is said) exalts it's private object above the other great and infinite object; it puts down being in general which is infinitely superior into an inferior place.†

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* See Poli Synopf. Piscator, Pareus, &c. in loc. Leigh's critica sacra. Owen on spiritual Mindedness, chap. 1.

† Edwards on the Nature of true Virtue, pag. 131,

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But this is argued rather like a rhetorician than a philosopher. It is not self-love that puts down being in general, but it is the privation of general benevolence. It is not any private affection in itself, but it's un subordinateness to the love of God and our fellow creatures that is vicious. This un subordinateness does not consist in the nature or strength of the affection, but is only the privation of a superior principle; that is, it is only the want of a supreme regard to God. It does not appear that self-love is stronger in selfish persons than in others; at least there is no need of supposing that it is in order to account for their conduct. The want of good will to others will set up self interest; or leave it to be the highest object of the affections. And indeed this is all in a selfish temper or affection that is in itself vicious. No action is the worse for being interested, or the better for being disinterested. Disinterested mischievousness imports the utmost wickedness. And it was no ways derogatory to the perfection of our Savior's submission to the will of God in his sufferings, that he endured the cross for the joy that was set before him.

Upon the whole, though the best actions of the unregenerate are not spiritually good, because essentially defective; yet they may be materially good; they may flow from principles, and be directed to ends good in themselves, though of an inferior kind. Nor is this any thing more than has been asserted by the most eminent lights of the christian church ancient and modern, as might easily be shewn. And therefore I cannot but wonder how Mr. H. should assert confidently in the face of the public, that "the world has yet found out but two sorts of good, viz. holiness and happiness;" unless he thought that his own conceptions were the ne plus of human discovery. Two or three testimonies I will produce
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for the better information of such as think this kind of goodness above mentioned to be a new discovery. Says Dr. Ames, speaking of actions of the unregenerate, "The substance of such works is *good*, because "even natural men therein do the things contained "in the law, Rom. 2. 14. But every work so far "as it agrees with the law is good." * Mastricht is yet more full. "They are," says he, "in themselves "truly good, but evil from their circumstances : "They are good, but not spiritually good. † And again, "The works of the heathens sometimes are "good in themselves, and thus far they also are pleasing to God, but not unto salvation." ‡ "Unto "some men especially," says Mr. Shepard, "nay "unto all men almost, though vile, yet more or less "the Lord gives a power to act and live and move, "and do many spiritual duties, or good duties from "themselves," &c. || But particular citations are needless in a matter so notorious. That there is *some kind of goodness* in the best actions of the unregenerate, has been never deny'd by any christian that I can find, before Mr. H. If he shall be able to prove the contrary, it is he, and not his opponents, that (so far as I can judge) will be entitled to the honour of making a new discovery.

I have been the larger in discussing the points treated of in this Section, because it appears to me, that our author with some others has fallen into much mistake, by confounding together things essentially different in their natures and causes ; and has greatly darkned the truth, and thrown stumbling blocks in the way of mens attending the means of conversion. If some particulars are not sufficiently cleared, the

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* De Conf. lib. 3. caap. 17. † Theologia Theor. pract. lib. 4. caap. 4. ‡ Id. pag. 1217. || Parab part 1. p. 28.

reader may perhaps find them further illustrated and confirmed in the following parts of this disputation, to which we shall now proceed.

S E C T. III.

Arguments proving that something is required of Men in a way of Duty previous and preparatory to Regeneration.

TO open our way more plainly to the ensuing arguments, I would premise one distinction, which the reader will find necessary to be attended to and carried in mind, that he may the better apprehend the force and pertinency of what is to be offered, and remove such objections as may occur : And that is the distinction between the *moral law simply considered*, and the *divine precepts as contained in scripture, and enjoined on men by supernatural revelation*.

The natural and supernatural law (if we may thus distinguish them) do agree in the general notion, or formal essence of law ; that is a rule and bond of duty with annexed sanctions. They agree also in their author, viz. God the supreme lawgiver. They also coincide in their requirements, so as mutually to strengthen each other. For the law of nature binds us to obey all supernatural discoveries of the divine will, as soon as they are made known to us ; it being an eternal principle of the law of nature that all supernatural revelations of the will of God (if any such there be) ought to be obeyed. And the supernatural law of revelation establishes the law of nature, not only as it always supposes it's unchangeable obligation,

ligation, but requires the same moral duties to which we are by the law of nature necessarily bound, and lays us under some additional obligations of obedience. The difference then here to be noted consists especially in these particulars.

1. The moral law strictly and simply considered flows necessarily from the nature of God and man, and the relation subsisting between them; but the commands of God enjoined by supernatural revelation, flow freely from his sovereign will. Though the creation of moral agents be a free sovereign act of the divine will, yet when once they are created their obligation to love and obey God results necessarily from the perfections and bounty of the creator, and the dependence of the creature on him for being and happiness. The moral law is therefore of necessary and unchangeable obligation. But such commands as are given by supernatural revelation are, as such, formally acts of divine sovereignty. The giving any such commands to mankind, was a free sovereign act of God's will. And it was the same sovereign will of God, that, according to the counsels of infinite wisdom, determined what precepts were to be contained in this supernatural law. Even those moral duties which are of eternal obligation, as well as those duties which are called positive, and are in their own nature changeable, have a place in this supernatural law, only because the sovereign will and authority of the great legislator was pleased so to ordain; and not from any necessity in the nature of things. Though a duty of necessary obligation cannot be cancelled by any act of the divine will, and therefore we are necessarily bound by the moral law; yet this infers no necessity that a supernatural revelation of God's will should take in every duty of the moral law. That additional inforcement of obedience, which results from

from a supernatural injunction, or positive act of sovereign authority, may be superadded to all, or to some only of the duties of the moral law, as infinite wisdom shall see fit, and the ends for which such a revelation is given may require.

2. The moral law binds all moral agents ; but the precepts of supernatural revelation bind those only to whom the revelation is given. The precepts of revelation, as such, belong only to fallen man. Yea such of mankind as are invincibly ignorant of divine revelation, are not bound to obey any of it's precepts *as such*, though they may be bound to the same duties for substance, as contained in the moral law of nature. The scripture revelation being designed for and given to fallen man alone, he only is subject to it's injunctions. Therefore,

3. The supernatural law is founded on the dispensation of grace through the mediator ; but the law of nature has no necessary dependence on that dispensation. The duties required of men in the gospel, are required for such ends as could not have taken place, unless an act of grace had passed in favor of fallen man. This I have elsewhere proved, nor is it that I know of denied by any. And I may add, that the duties are many of them such in their nature, that there could have been no possible place for them, unless in consequence of the dispensation of grace.

4. The moral law simply considered requires obedience, merely because it is right and justly due. It exacts duties solely as a debt in which we are bound to God, and not as means of future advantage, or conditions of future rewards. The law gives no reward beyond the condign merit of a creature, which is perfectly nothing. Whatever benefit or reward may accrue to a creature in the way of obedience is owing to divine bounty, or a free promise, intirely distinct

distinct from mere law ; nor does the obligation of the law depend at all upon it. But the precepts of revelation require duties not only as debts of obedience, but also as means in order to some further ends. Even those duties which are required by the moral law, and so are of necessary obligation, have by the gracious appointment of God an instrumental subserviency to the benefit of mankind, in this and the coming world, and *as such* are enjoined in the scriptures. By being taken into this supernatural law, and appointed as means of our present and future happiness, *moral precepts* have a new and distinct obligation and enforcement superadded to them by the sovereign will of God ; and we have a new additional reason for obeying them. And as to *positive precepts*, our obligation to the observance of them is wholly to be resolved into God's sovereign will, and their subserviency as means to some good end, distinct from the performance therein required.

Corollary. If duties be required in the scripture as means in order to some further end, by the sovereign appointment of God, and it hence be concluded that such a performance of them as is fitted to subserve the end proposed is contained in the requirement, and of consequence is a commanded duty, how far short soever it may fall of that perfection of obedience, which the law requires, this conclusion will not imply any relaxation of the obligation men are under to yield perfect obedience to the moral law, or extenuate the guilt of any failure in the least degree. But of this afterwards.

The attentive reader, I trust, cannot but perceive from these observations, what will more plainly appear in our progress, that is, the fitness and necessity of distinguishing between the moral law considered simply and strictly in itself, as a rule and bond of right

right action to moral agents in general ; and the divine precepts given by supernatural revelation, to fallen man alone, upon the foundation of divine grace through the mediator, prescribing duties as means of carrying into execution God's merciful purposes towards the children of men. This being premised, I shall now address myself to the proof of my position, as above stated and explained.

I. The principles laid down in the preceeding section unavoidably lead us to conclude, that something is required of men in a way of duty, which they are able to do previous to regeneration.

It has been proved that the unregenerate who enjoy gospel privileges are able, by the common assistance of divine providence and grace, to reform their lives ; to break off from courses and acts of open sin in opposition to the dictates of their own conscience ; to do actions materially good, and that seriously and conscientiously according to their present light. They have both faculties and principles of action sufficient for these things. If these things are enjoined upon them by, and contained in those commands which God in his word has laid upon them, then it is their duty thus to reform their lives, and attend the means of grace, that is, something is their duty which they have a power to do before regeneration. The consequence cannot be denied, unless we will deny that it is the duty of men to do whatever God has enjoined on them.

But those things abovementioned, which men have a power to do while unregenerate, are contained in and enjoined by those commands which God in his word has laid upon them. For it has been shewn, and is abundantly evident from scripture, that the divine command requires not only right principles and ends of action, but also that the action itself
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be materially good. It regulates the performances as well as the affections ; the external and imperate, as well as the immanent or elicit acts of the will. It enjoins the work itself, as well as those circumstances which are requisite to constitute it a holy action. Mr. H. owns, that if there be any commands enjoining a reformation of life and a good behaviour on the regenerate, then the same is enjoined on the unregenerate. For he says (p. 116.) “ No duty is required of the regenerate which the unregenerate “ are not also commanded to do.” * The unregenerate then are commanded to reform their lives ; to hear, read, and meditate on the word of God ; to examine their hearts and ways, and pray to God for pardoning mercy through Jesus Christ. That is, they are commanded to do those actions, which they have both faculties and principles sufficient to enable them to do, as to the substance of the performance.

If then the command requires *such actions*, as well as such circumstances, principles, and manner of acting, as are implied in true holiness ; then the substance of the actions, though destitute of these circumstances, are matter of duty, as being a part, though not the whole of the requirement. The command obliges to the whole of our duty, and to each distinct part of it. Such effective acts of the will as are required, are materially good ; they have a goodness distinct from, and not dependent on all those circumstances and qualifications, which are necessary to constitute them holy actions. And there is an obligation to the performance of them, *besides* the obligation to perform them in a right manner in
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* This is not true. It is doubtless the duty of the regenerate to thank God for his distinguishing mercy in their election, regeneration, conversion, justification, &c ; which cannot be the present duty of any unregenerate sinner.

every respect ; and consequently, there is an obligation to the doing of that which men are able to do before regeneration.

Actions may be taken in a twofold sense, that is, as learned writers express it, *in sensu composito* & *in sensu diviso*. The meaning is, they may be taken as comprehending, and invested with, all their moral circumstances, qualifications, and adjuncts ; or they may be taken simply and abstractly in themselves. In the latter sense, no imperate act of the will can be denominated holy, though for substance conformable to the divine command ; because holiness implies a conformity to the will of God in the circumstances and qualifications, as well as the substance of the action ; as has been before declared. Yet the actions of men are subject to the divine command in the latter as well as the former sense ; that is, the divine command enjoins the whole of what is contained in a holy action *conjunctly*, and it enjoins each ingredient of the action in this compound sense, *severally*. We are commanded to do actions materially good ; we are also commanded to do them in such a manner, and with such a degree of strength, as is perfectly conformable to the rule of our duty. But these things are so commanded, that however we may fail in some particulars, we are nevertheless bound to the observance of all and each of the other. Which may be thus proved. The guilt of any sinful action is more or less multiplied or aggravated, as it is inconformable to the divine law in more or fewer respects. If an action be answerable to the law in matter and manner, but somewhat deficient in the degree or strength of the performance, it's sinfulness is not so great, as if it were deficient in a greater degree : It would be yet more sinful if not done for a holy end ; and still more if done for an unlawful or forbidden end ;

end ; and finally it's guilt would be yet greater if the action itself, as well as it's end and circumstances were unlawful. * It is not so bad for a man to exercise a covetous principle, by striving to acquire riches in a lawful way that he may lay up treasures on earth, (though this is utterly forbidden) as it would be to seek riches for the same purpose by stealing, robbery, and all manner of unrighteousness. If there were not an obligation to the performance of the action in itself considered, as well as taken in conjunction with all it's moral circumstances ; then the omission of it would not in itself be sin, nor could it add any thing to the guilt arising from the irregularity of such circumstances. For sin is the transgression of the law. We may be sure that that is in itself a duty, the omission of which is in itself sin. Now though external duties *in sensu diviso* be not holiness, yet the omission of them is in itself sin : And consequently external duties are required in and by the divine law. We are so bound by the law of God that an uninterrupted course of obedience is our duty ; and each particular act taken by itself is also our duty ; and in each act of obedience, perfection in degree, according to the strength of our faculties is our duty ; and so is every inferior degree that can be supposed : And finally whatever is contained in the essence of true holiness collectively considered is our duty ; and at the same time each particular ingredient, circumstance or qualification, is also our duty, taken separately and by itself. And our guilt is multiplied and enhanced according as we have violated more of these obligations, and broken the divine command in more respects.

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* To omit the duty (external observances of religion) wholly, is worse than to perform good in a wrong manner, and to be doing evil instead of both is yet much worse. Goodwin's Works, Vol. 3. pag. 430.

108 Mr. H's Objections to the first Argument

To sum up the argument. Since actions materially good, considered in themselves, are required of men as matter of duty ; and, since unregenerate sinners have a power to do actions materially good ; we conclude, that unregenerate sinners have a power to do something which is required as matter of duty : Which is the point we undertook to maintain.

Mr. H. has moved an objection which contains the substance of the argument above proposed, viz. " That men by doing actions materially good, do some part of their duty, and so far obey the command." Pag. 117. How he has succeeded in his attempt to answer it we will now consider.

He says, " Nothing is either duty or sin, if considered without any respect to the heart, and as not implying any exercises of that." Pag. 117.

Answ. We may here note that this assertion, " that nothing is either sin or duty, if considered as not implying any exercises of the heart," is a plain denial of the doctrines of original sin and righteousness, or of sinfulness or righteousness of nature distinct from, and previous to all acts of the mind. But this I suppose was owing to inadvertence, and therefore I shall take no further notice of it. There are also some sins of omission which do not imply any exercises of heart. If the proposition be limited to actions, we grant it ; but it will easily appear that it makes nothing against us. For,

All actions whether taken in the compound, or divided sense are acts of the will. The substance of an action, is the action itself abstracted from it's circumstances. External actions are acts of the will *ad extra*. Involuntary motions and effects are not the substance and matter of action. Nor are the natural effects and consequences of our voluntary exertions, though apprehended and chosen by us, the substance of
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our action properly speaking. This is no other than the very act of our will, chusing that those effects should take place, and putting forth our executive power for the production of them. Mr. H. strangely supposes that by the substance and matter of a duty or action is meant something distinct from all exercises of the heart, or acts of the will; something of which a meer machine is capable; and then concludes, (as well he might) that there is no sin or duty in all this, in itself considered; adding some contemptuous expressions of those who are otherwise minded, as persons, who bewilder themselves with a set of words without meaning. We leave them to his correction if there be any so absurd as to hold that to be the matter of an action which is no act of the will. But what is this to the purpose of answering our argument, which supposes the duties in question to be voluntary actions? Methinks somebody else is got bewildered, besides those men of straw which our author attacks with so much spirit.

It is further pleaded, supposing the actions in question be voluntary, yet it is rather more absurd "to speak of a man's doing any part of his duty in his external conduct, when his conduct is considered as the fruit of wrong and sinful exercises of heart." Pag. 118.

Ans. 1. We do not suppose that the *fruit* of any exercises of the heart, or acts of the will, whether right or wrong, is the matter of duty, unless *that fruit* be also an act of the will. Now there is no absurdity in supposing, that an act of the will may in itself be good, and the matter of a commanded duty, though it be the fruit of a preceding act which was not so. Mr. Edwards before, did not think there was a gross absurdity in supposing that the goodness or evil of actions lay in their nature and not in their cause. *

Giving

* Enquiry concerning the Will, part iv. sect. 1.

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Giving alms is a good action in itself, and the matter of duty ; though, in the Pharisees it was the fruit of pride, which before was no good principle. If the object chosen be good, the act of choosing is materially good, however it may be wrong in it's adjuncts and circumstances. It is good *in sensu diviso*. It is wrong *in sensu composito*. An act of choice in itself is either good or evil according to the nature of it's object. Since then we are divinely commanded to do actions materially good, we conclude that it is our duty to do them.

It will be enquired, is it then our duty to do these things from wrong principles, and for unlawful ends ?

Ans. 1. It is not our duty to be actuated by evil principles, or aim at unlawful ends, in any of our actions. This is utterly sinful. But the doing a commanded action is in itself a duty, how much soever we may fail in the principle, end and manner of the performance. And our guilt will be double, if the action as well as it's principle and end be utterly wrong.

2. The principles and ends of mens actions may be said to be wrong in two senses. 1. When they are in themselves absolutely forbidden, as when a man acts from malice. To act at all with a mischievous intent is unlawful. In this case the formal principle, and final cause of the action is in itself sin. The action not only flows from a heart that is corrupt, but from the corruption itself. 2. The principles and ends of mens actions are said to be wrong, when they are defective ; though in themselves good in their kind. Such are the principles of self-love, natural conscience, &c. in the unregenerate. Now when men do actions materially good from these principles, they do not act from sinful principles as sinful. That is, though they are defectively corrupt, the action

action does not flow and take it's form from their corruption, as was noted in the last section. This is well expressed by Dr. Preston, "Take man's nature," says he, "as secluded from [sanctifying] grace, it is "able to do two things ; to bring forth sin and lust, "which comes from the corruption of it, and likewise many excellent virtues, which proceed from "common nature which is in a man unregenerate, "as well as sinful nature." * "A man may do a "thing by nature," says Mr. Charnock, "from a "good principle, a principle of common honesty good "in it's kind, (brass is good in it's kind but not so "good as silver) but not evangelically good without "a renewed affection to God." † Now though the want of this renewed affection to God, in performing the substance of commanded duties, be utterly sinful, yet to act from a natural principle good in itself is lawful : And to do actions materially good, from such a principle is a duty, as we shall see more fully in the sequel.

It is further argued by Mr. H. that what are called external duties "are not required for their own "sakes, or in themselves considered, but only as "proper ways of exercising and expressing love to "God. Love to God is therefore the thing required : "The whole of the duty lies in this : And where "this is wanting the externals are as to duty an empty "nothing, not the thing required ; and in doing "them no duty is done." Pag. 118, 119.

Here are two propositions, of which the latter (according to Mr. H.) follows from the former, being connected with it by the illative particle [therefore.] We will first consider their connection, and then examine the truth of each of them apart.

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* Serm. 6. on Rom. 1. 18.

† Vol. 2. page 16. Fol.

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As to their connection: Our author here argues, that
 “if external duties are not required for their own sakes,
 “but only as proper ways of exercising and express-
 “ing love to God; then love to God is the [only]
 “thing required: The whole duty lies in this.” But
 how can this consequence flow from the antecedent to
 which it is subjoined? Or indeed how can it consist
 with it? Common sense I should imagine, would
 conclude that if external duties are required at all,
 whether for their own sakes, or on any other account;
 then love to God is not the only thing required,
 nor does the duty lie wholly in this. Certain it is,
 that external actions are as diverse from love, as the
 effect is from it's cause, as the sign is from the thing
 signified; as an immanent affection is from an exer-
 tion of operative power for the performance of an
 outward work. On the contrary, if love be the only
 thing required, no imperate act of the will is required
 at all. If the whole duty lies in love, no part of it
 lies in expressing love, or in exerting any effective
 acts from any principle whatever. All the fruits
 and effects of love in a way of endeavour to glorify
 God, and do good to men, being in nature intirely
 diverse from the affection of love, must be cancelled
 from the list of duties, as well as the endeavours of
 the unregenerate. To draw a consequence from a
 principle inconsistent with and contrary to it, is me-
 thinks a little extraordinary. But,

Let us now examine the truth of each proposition
 apart. To begin with the latter, viz. That in ex-
 ternal duties of religion love to God is the only thing
 required, the whole duty lies in this. This must be
 denied, since not only scripture and reason, but Mr.
 H. himself will support us in saying, that endeavours
 of external obedience are required, as well as the af-
 fection of love, at least when they accompany and
 flow

flow from love to God, and are genuine fruits exercises and expressions of it. I add, that since the omission of such endeavours is *sin in itself*, as well as the want of a principle of divine love in them, and so doubles the sinners guilt; it must be concluded, that the former is a part of duty as well as the latter; and that there is an obligation to both conjunctly, and to each severally.

Perhaps we have not yet fully hit the joint. If not I hope we shall at length find it, in examining the other proposition, viz. "External duties of religion are not required for their own sakes, or in themselves considered; but only as proper ways of exercising and expressing love to God."

It will be necessary to premise a few things for the better understanding of what is here asserted, which as it lies may not appear so plain. External duties are of two kinds, moral and positive. To speak and behave reverently in respect to God, justly truly and kindly towards men, seem to be duties of perpetual obligation, on supposition that we have power and occasion of speaking, and acting at all. Now there is a fitness and goodness in such a manner of behaviour, a suitableness to our state and relations; and a contrary behaviour would be naturally unseemly and pernicious. There is a goodness in right actions considered in themselves, and therefore they are fit expressions of good affections. External actions are not like words in themselves equally fit to express any idea. There is truth righteousness and goodness in speech and behaviour, as well as in the sentiments and affections of the heart. Whatever principle a man acts from, lying, acts of injustice and cruelty, are unfit and evil in themselves; and on the contrary acts of righteousness and mercy are in themselves right.

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There are other external duties which are called positive. The substance of such actions is not in itself of necessary obligation, but is sanctified and enjoined merely by the sovereign will of God. Of this kind are institutions of religious worship.

Concerning external duties it is enquired, 1. Whether they are required *for their own sakes*? If the meaning be, whether they are required because right and fit in themselves, and not in their own nature absolutely indifferent, I answer positive duties are not required for their own sakes. The performance of them is good because required, not required because good in itself. But to speak the truth, to do justly, to behave reverently towards God, are duties in themselves fit. There is a goodness in such a manner of conduct; and it may truly be said that these things are required for their own sakes, or because right in themselves; though perhaps this may not be the sole reason of their requirement. Positive duties are required not for their own sakes, but for some further end. Actions morally good may be and are required partly for their own sakes, and partly as instrumental to other purposes distinct from the performance. If then unregenerate sinners may perform external duties, good in themselves, as has been proved, it must be concluded that this is required of them. And if they can attend instrumental duties, so as that their attendance shall be conducive to the end for which they are required, as shall in due time be proved; their not being required for their own sakes will not at all weaken our argument, that such an attendance is in itself their duty.

2. Are external duties of religion required *in themselves considered*? If this means the same with the former enquiry, it has now been answered. But it seems Mr. H. in denying this, intends something further;

ther; viz. That what are called external duties of religion, materially considered, or *in sensu diviso*, are not required but upon the supposition that they are conjoined with and flow from love to God. That is, these things are *duties* if they are true expressions and fruits of love to God, otherwise they are not required at mens hands. To open this a little it may be noted, that some duties are binding upon us as moral agents, without implying or presupposing any other qualifications than natural capacities and advantages for obedience. Such are the duties of loving God and our neighbour. Other duties are required of men only consequentially, or *on supposition* that they are subjects *thus qualified*, and the action be *thus performed*. It may be their present duty to be thus qualified, and so to do the duty consequentially required without any delay; yet the doing of it while unqualified is not a duty; it is not required, and ought not to be done. And some circumstances though not essential to an action, *as an action*, may yet be essential to it, *as a duty required*. Thus though it be the present duty of those who have had sufficient means of instruction, to believe in Christ and profess their faith; yet it is not the duty of any one to profess faith until he does believe. Profession, baptism and the Lord's supper are duties *on supposition*, that the subjects are qualified according to the rules of the gospel. Though it may be the sin of an unbeliever that he does not now join himself to the christian church, yet it would be a greater sin for him to profess faith, and be baptized, while conscious that he is an infidel. It may be the present duty of a professed christian to partake of the Lord's supper; yet it is not his duty to eat and drink at the Lord's table unless he do it *religiously*, in remembrance of Christ. And if any one should do the outward action, meerly

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to satisfy his hunger, qualify himself for a communion, or gratify an intemperate appetite for wine, without any religious views ; we might truly say that what he does is no duty at all, but a great sin ; because a religious manner of eating and drinking is essential to partaking of the Lord's supper, *as a duty* ; and we ought not to do the outward action at all unless we do it religiously. In this case though we cannot say that the qualification of the person, and the religious manner of the performance, is the only thing required, and that the whole of the duty lies in this, (for external actions are also required) yet we grant that these circumstances are essential to the outward actions, considered as duties ; “and where these are wanting, the externals are as to duty an empty nothing, “or rather much worse than nothing, and in doing “them no duty is done” ; and that for this plain reason, because these externals are required *only on supposition* of these other requisites ; and consequently these adjuncts belong to the substance and matter of the *duty*, though they belong not to the substance of the *outward action* : Which action is a commanded duty only in the compounded and not in the divided sense.

This appears to be Mr. H's meaning, when he says, that the unregenerate in attending the externals of religion, do nothing that is their duty. He considers these things as enjoined on men only on supposition that they are regenerate, and have a holy love to God. For he says, “they are required only as “expressions of love to God.” Expressions of love, as such, are duties only on supposition of love. Now as it is the main design of this section to confute this notion, it will not be necessary that we detain the reader long, by framing a full reply to this exception, before we proceed to our ensuing arguments. Yet a few things may be hinted briefly.

1. If

1. If this be true, then it is as unlawful for an unregenerate sinner to speak the truth, do an act of justice or kindness to a neighbour, rescue his parent when in danger of death, to read or hear the word of God, or pray to him for any mercy temporal or spiritual, or do any external action whatever; as it would be for an unbeliever contrary to his inward persuasion to profess faith, be baptized, and come to the Lord's table purely to get drunk. For the requirement of duties only on supposition of regeneration and love to God, implies the prohibition of them, in all other cases. It is as unlawful for one who has not a holy love to God, to do any thing required only as an expression of such love, as it is for one who has no religious regard to Christ, to do an action required only as an expression of religious regard to him.

2. Then it is a greater sin for an unregenerate sinner to read and hear God's word, and pray to him, than to refrain from it; even as it is a greater sin for an infidel to profess faith, &c. than not to do it. For a duty required only on supposition of love to God, is, by one who has not this qualification, and while he has it not, omitted with less guilt than done.

3. Then it is as unwarrantable and presumptuous for any one, whether regenerate or not, to endeavour an attendance on an external duty of religion, until he has some prevailing evidence that his endeavours are sincere expressions of holy love, as it is for a man to offer himself to baptism, or to join in partaking at the Lord's table, without a prevailing persuasion that he is in a good measure qualified for it, and shall attend the ordinance in a religious manner. It is indeed mens fault when they do not love God: So it is if they (enjoying gospel privileges) are not qualified for the outward seals of the covenant. Yet while they

they are unqualified they ought to refrain from them, and while they have no evidence of their qualifications, they are, in the judgment of their consciences, unqualified, and so obliged to refrain. And thus every one who has no prevailing persuasion of his being a lover of God, must in conscience refrain from such actions as are required only on supposition of holy love, and as expressions of the same; as for instance, from declaring that he has such love, and according to Mr. H's scheme from every other external duty.

4. Then there is the same reason to caution and warn men against presuming to read and hear the word of God, to pray to him, or attend on any external duty of religion, until they first find some evidence that they either are, or shall be regenerated in and with the attempt; as there is to warn men not to come to the Lord's table until they find some evidence of their being duly qualified for it.

I could easily go on further, but I forbear. Methinks these consequences are so intolerable, that no principle ought to be admitted from which they can fairly be deduced. If they can fairly be avoided on Mr. H's plan, let it be shewn.

It is true the external duties of religion are in themselves fit ways wherein love to God may be exercised and expressed, and it is the duty of all men to exercise love to God in attending on them. But it is most false to say, that they are required only as exercises and expressions of holy love. They are required in the gospel primarily and principally *as means*, through the spirit's influence, of enlightening, convincing, converting and sanctifying those who are chosen in Christ to salvation: As also of restraining the out-breakings of sin in many others, and so preventing the bad consequences in this world. And such

such an attendance on the external duties of religion, as does not imply any exercises of true love to God, may be well adapted to subserve several of those ends for which they are required ; as for instance, to promote the present welfare of mankind, to awaken and humble sinners, prepare them for regeneration, and lead them on to a saving conversion. Why then should any think that such an attendance is not the duty of men, previous to regeneration ?

Whether the argument hitherto insisted on and defended be not valid, notwithstanding what has yet been urged to enervate it, let the unbiassed judge. Mr. H. indeed takes the freedom at the close of his first plea against "unregenerate duties" (as well as at other times) to seat himself a while upon the bench. He has given his judgment "that the short plain argument he has considered is quite sufficient to end the dispute." But it may be doubted, whether it be proper for every *pleader* to follow the precedent. Some liberties appear well enough in great men, which would scarce be thought modest in persons of mean rank. Perhaps our author was however a little too sanguine in concluding so peremptorily, "that it is as demonstrably evident that there is no obedience but what consists in love, as any truth contained in divine revelation, and must approve itself to the reason of every one who will exercise his reason, and not confuse and bewilder himself with a set of words without meaning." Pag. 117. On what evidence this conclusion stands we shall see presently.

II. Our point may be further proved from sundry texts of scripture. The first I shall produce is the conference between our Savior and the scribe, recorded in Mark xii. 28,——34. *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together,*

ther, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, master, thou hast said the truth: For there is one God, and there is none other but he. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And, when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

It may seem a little remarkable, that arguments concluding in direct contradiction to each other, should be founded on this conference. Mr. H's principal argument to disprove "unregenerate duties," is taken from this discourse of our Lord as related by Matthew, chap. xxii. 37,—39. In stating and vindicating our argument from this passage, we shall be unavoidably led to examine Mr. H's reasoning on the matter, which would otherwise have been referred to another place.

The question which this scribe put to our Savior, was not, "what is the sum of all the commands, and of man's duty as contained in them? He did not conceive that the whole duty of man was expressed in one or two commands. It would be evidently improper on this supposition to enquire which is the first, what is the greatest commandment of all. It seems

seems to have been a point disputed among the Jewish doctors, which of all the commands of the law was to be accounted the greatest. And this scribe observing that Jesus had answered the sadducees well was desirous to hear his judgment of this great question.

Our Savior in his reply directly resolves the point proposed, declaring expressly that the first and great commandment is to love God with all the heart. To which he adds the second requiring the love of our neighbour. Though the scribe's question was only concerning the greatest command of all, yet as the second was like the first, it is with good reason conjoined with it ; and the rather because it seems to have been a prevailing error among the Jewish teachers, that the social virtues were not very important, provided men were but zealous and exact in attending ordinances of divine worship. Besides, these two commandments have the closest connection. He that truly loves God loves his neighbour also. Our Lord therefore joining these two great moral precepts together, which may be considered as a kind of summary of the moral law, adds, "there is no other commandment greater than these," that is, these are the greatest : There is no other of equal importance. Now here are two things to be carefully noted.

1. It was not our Savior's design to comprehend all the commands of God in these two great precepts. This is evident, because he refers to other commands, and draws a comparison between these other, and those two great ones of which he had been speaking. To say that the law of love is greater than the other commands, implies that there are other commands. The comparative terms *greater* and *less* are relative, and necessarily suppose their correlatives. Nor can it be said, that these other commands, with which the

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law of love stands compared, are contained in it. For they are plainly distinguished from it ; they are called *other commands*. A part of any thing cannot be called another thing, than that in which it is contained. Besides, if we should suppose that the comparison is between the whole of the divine law and some particular commands contained in it, our Savior's saying "there is no other commandment greater than these," would amount to no more than this, that a part is not greater than the whole : Which would be trifling and uninformative.

2. Those other commands, with which the great precepts of the law are compared, do not contain in them those which require the love of God and our neighbour. For if they did, they would not be other commands, but the very same, with only the addition of some new requirements. And besides, the precepts requiring the love of God and our neighbour, are said to be greater than the other ; which would be palpably absurd, if the law of love were involved in these other. It would be saying that the law of love is greater than the same law, with these other precepts taken together. That is, that a part is greater than the whole ; that the love of God and our neighbour is a greater duty, than a duty which contains in it the love of God and our neighbour.

How can these consequences be avoided ? Will any pretend that to say "there is no other commandment greater than these," does not necessarily imply that there is any other ? This would be charging our Lord with gross impropriety of language. Had he thought that those two commandments contained all, he would have said there is no other commandment *besides these*. Or if there were any doubt about the matter, the answer of the scribe, which was approved as discreet, must satisfy it. Says he, to love God and
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our neighbour is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Here those commanded duties are mentioned, with which the love of God and our neighbour are compared ; and which we have shewn are distinct from it, neither containing it nor contained in it, in the sense here intended. Religious ordinances laid an obligation of obedience on those to whom they were given : Yet they were not so important as the love of God and our neighbour. This is the sense and scope of our Lord's discourse ; which is parallel with what he afterwards said, when reproving the partiality and hypocrisy of the scribes and pharisees in their religious obedience. Says he, " ye tithe
 " mint anise and cummin, and have omitted the
 " weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy,
 " and faith (with the love of God. Luk. 11. 42.)
 " these ought ye to have done, and not to leave
 " the other undone." * This text is also much to our purpose, and the same conclusions will flow from it. Paying tithes is here declared to be a duty, or what ought to be done ; and another duty distinct from the weightier matters of the law. But this text is so similar in meaning and expression, to what has just been considered, that 'tis needless to make more particular observations on it.

From the whole we conclude that an attendance on religious ordinances is enjoined on men by other commands than those which enjoin holy love. And consequently something is required as matter of duty different from love, and which does not in itself necessarily imply any exercises of such love. There is therefore an obligation on those to whom the word of salvation is sent, to attend the instituted means of grace, besides the obligation they are under to do it in the exercise of true love to God. Our Savior's

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* Mat. 23. 23,

determination upon the case proposed to him, furnishes us with a sure principle for our determinations, with respect to the positive precepts of the gospel. Such an attendance on the means of grace is required as does not in itself necessarily imply or presuppose regeneration, or the actings of faith and love; that is, such an attendance as men have a power for while unregenerate. And this obligation respects all religious ordinances, except such as may evidently appear to be limited and appropriated to qualified subjects, that is, to believers, as those ordinances which are called sacraments I suppose are. And we may by parity of reason conclude that such external acts of obedience to moral precepts as the unregenerate by God's common assistance are able to perform, are also commanded duties.

Let us now take a view of Mr. H's reasoning from this conference, where we have the argument on which he seems chiefly to depend, and which, if we will take his judgment, is quite sufficient to end the dispute. I must now anticipate a little the business of the next section, and for a while take the place of *respondent*.

Says he, "According to our Savior's account of the
 "divine law or commandment (Mat. 22. 37,—39.)
 "it requires nothing but love to God and our neigh-
 "bour." P. 116. Answer, Our Savior's words as
 related by Matthew, prove no such thing as is here
 asserted; and as related by Mark they imply the
 very reverse. Mr. H. adds, "He expressly says on
 "these two commandments hang all the law and the
 "prophets, (ver. 40.) That is, all that is required in
 "the law and in the prophets, every injunction and
 "command to be found in divine revelation really
 "requires nothing but love to God and our neigh-
 "bour." P. 117. Answ. But this interpretation of
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our Savior's words is contrary to reason and scripture, and for what yet appears has nothing to support it but Mr. H's authority ; which (without disparagement) may be confronted by an authority no way inferior, that is by the authority of the same Mr. H. who in a passage lately produced acknowledges that the externals of religion are in some cases required. But perhaps our author does not mean that the inward affection of love is all that is required, but " Love acted out and expressed in all proper ways." Ibid.

Answ. By love acted out and expressed, I conceive nothing can be intended but the external fruits and expressions of love, which however they may be confounded with love under figurative expressions, are in nature as diverse from it as any other effect is from it's cause. We do indeed allow that nothing is required as duty, but what is either implied in the affection of love, or is a fit way of exercising and expressing it ; nothing which may not be considered as comprehended in love, if not formally, yet virtually and radically, as being apt to flow from it, as an effect from it's cause, or an act from it's habit. But that no external duties of religion are required, but such as *actually* flow from love, and so imply the exercises of it, (which I think is the most candid sense in which Mr. H's words can be taken) is not at all proved by our Savior's words, and is untrue, as has been shewn from this very passage of scripture, and shall be further demonstrated. But Mr. H. proceeds—" No other natural and easy sense can be put upon these words of Christ ;" (How can we know that ?) " But would they bear another sense, what St. Paul says on the same subject, fixes the meaning of them. He says, He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. And again, Love is the fulfilling of the law. Love could not be the fulfilling

“filling of the law, if the law required any thing
 “more than love acted out to a perfect degree, and
 “in a proper manner. Love is therefore the whole
 “duty of man. Nothing more nor less is required.
 “God has not given one precept to man in the law
 “or the prophets, in the old testament or new, but
 “what requires love to God, or man, or both ; and
 “is to be obeyed in the exercise of love, and no o-
 “ther way, or by nothing else. There is therefore
 “no obedience but what consists in love ; and where
 “there is nothing of this there is no duty done ;
 “nothing that is required, and is due, is given.”

P. 117.

I have now given the reader the intire argument with which Mr. H. would prove that nothing more or less than love is required : On which we may note——

1. Here is nothing tending to enervate the proofs we have given, that there are other commands besides the great ones our Savior speaks of.

2. If love be taken in it's proper sense for an affection or immanent act of the will, it will be flatly contrary to the current of scripture, and to divers of Mr. H's expressions, to say that nothing besides love is required. It is certain that good works as well as love are commanded duties.

3. We have no reason to think that love in the texts of scripture above referred to is to be understood as including all those acts of external obedience which flow from it. It does not appear that it is ever used in so extensive a sense in the scriptures. Mr. H. before has offered nothing to prove that it is, unless the words of the apostle, “Love is the
 “fulfilling of the law,” may be thought to imply it ; which will be considered immediately.

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4. There is nothing in the shape of an argument to prove that nothing more or less than love is required, except two texts of scripture, viz. Mat. 22. 40. Rom. 13. 8, 9. If then these texts should be capable of a construction different from what he has given, his argument will come to nothing. Now it does not appear that there is any necessity of taking these texts in the sense he has given, and indeed if they are closely examined they will not bear that sense.

When our Savior says, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," he is speaking of commandments which he had just been comparing with and declaring greater than others, and which were consequently diverse from those others to which they are preferred. And there is nothing in the expression here used that so much as intimates that every command in divine revelation really requires nothing but love. On the contrary when one thing is said to hang on another, we naturally conceive of a difference between them. All the law and the prophets may properly be said to hang on these two commandments, if these are greater than any other; if these are the foundation, the ultimate end of other precepts, and indeed of the whole of divine revelation, which is designed to recover men to the love of God and their neighbour; if other duties required in the word of God naturally and regularly flow from love as their principle or efficient cause. It seems to me that the phrase here used cannot, without straining, be made to comprehend much more, at least it cannot bear Mr. H's construction: Nor has he hinted one reason for his sense of the words, except his referring to the words of St. Paul, which he supposes to be parallel and to fix the meaning of this text, may pass for a reason.

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Our whole business then is to attend to this passage of the apostle here referred to, which taken in it's connection is as follows. Rom. xiii. 7—10. "Render therefore to all their dues, &c. Owe no man any thing but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet. And if there be any other commandment it is briefly comprehended (*anakephalaioantai*) in this saying namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." On these words we may observe.

1. That the apostle seems evidently to speak of the law in a limited sense, meaning only what is called the second table; containing our duty to our neighbour. At most it comprehends only the moral law. Now if it should be supposed that the *moral law* requires nothing but love, this will not prove that there are no *ordinances* pertaining to the external worship of God which require any thing besides love. For that law of which the apostle is speaking does not contain every divine command. It does not contain positive precepts, which (as we learn from our Savior's words) are distinct from that law which obliges us to love our neighbour as ourselves. God by his sovereign authority may have enjoined external duties of religion of a quite different kind, for any thing that can be argued to the contrary from this text.

2. It is certain that the moral law, and even the second table requires something besides love, in the strict sense. It requires acts of kindness. And it also requires a *due degree* of love, and endeavour to do

do good. If then love be taken in so large, and qualified a sense as to include the whole of our duty, or a perfect conformity to the law in all respects ; then it is true, that this is strictly the fulfilling of the law ; and every one in whom this is found has fulfilled the law. But then I say that something less than perfect obedience is also required of us by God. Something is our duty, which in itself is not a complete fulfillment of the whole law. The exercises and actings of love in true christians are commanded duties, though by reason of their imperfection they are not the fulfilling of the law. These and much more are their duty. True it is, that nothing more can be required of any one than to fulfill the law. But this will never prove that nothing less, is in any case required. The whole of our duty in a perfect degree, and each part, in all it's degrees is jointly and severally required. That holiness which is perfectly answerable to the law is our duty ; and such acts of holiness as are imperfect, and consequently are not the fulfilling of the law are our duty : And external duties of religion, though in themselves they have not the complete essence of true holiness, yet are a part of that duty whereby the divine command is fulfilled. The substance of the duty is enjoined as well as it's circumstances. That ought to be done, and these not omitted, though the substance of external duties without love be not gospel holiness ; and though gospel holiness being imperfect in degree be not the fulfilling of the law, or the whole duty therein required.

If it be said, that any act of obedience is a fulfilling the law : I answer, it may be so termed in some sense : It is a doing something required in the law. But this is not the sense in which the apostle uses the phrase. He means the whole of our duty in it's full

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extent

extent. But if the apostle intended by the fulfilling of the law, only a particular act of obedience, then his saying that love is an instance of obedience to the law, does not imply but that there may be many other instances. Love and the fruits of love, and actions materially good though destitute of holy love, may all consistently enough be instances of duty, by doing of which we *in this sense* fulfil or obey the law in some respect. If it be said that, every instance of obedience or duty implies some degree of holy love, this is only begging the question. But,

3. If we attend carefully to the apostles words, it will I think plainly appear, that there are other duties we owe to our neighbour besides love, in the sense here intended. "Owe no man any thing but to love one another, for he that loveth," &c. The apostle here evidently mentions other debts or duties owing to others besides love. Such as rendring to every one his due. And he observes a notable difference between this debt of love, and those others; viz. that these must be discharged by actual payment; which when we have done, we shall owe them no longer. But that other debt of love we shall always owe our neighbour, though we should owe him nothing else. The apostle here distinguishes between rendring to all their due, and loving one another: He compares and opposes these different duties to each other: Which shews that the former are not included in love in the sense here intended. I see not how any tolerable sense can be made of the text, if love be understood to contain those other duties which are compared with it. For then the meaning must stand thus: "Owe no man any thing except love, that is, except tribute, custom, fear, honour and every thing else which is ever due from one man to another:" The bare recital of which is a sufficient

sufficient confutation. And thus the words of Paul pointed to by Mr. H. confirm the sense we have given of our Savior's words. They both appear to use the word love in it's proper sense : And neither of them comprizes in it all acts of external obedience : And consequently Mr. H's assertion, " That nothing more or less than love is required," not only wants proof, but is fully confuted, and convicted of falshood from those very texts by which he endeavours to maintain it.

But it may be enquired, Why is love called the fulfilling of the law ; and he that loveth another said to have fulfilled the law ; and all the commandments of the second table comprehended briefly in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self ?— This may easily and satisfactorily be answered, I conceive, if we will not cut the apostles words to the quick, which some expositors perhaps have too much done. The learned *Toletus* seems to have given the true meaning of this passage as follows. " The law is " said to be fulfilled two manner of ways. 1. When " each of the precepts are fulfilled in particular, &c. " 2. When that is done on which the whole law depends, or unto which the whole law is ordained or " framed, or by which the whole law is performed. " And thus he that loveth hath fulfilled the whole " law ; as well because love is the principle, cause " and root of all other things which are commanded ; " as because love is the end or scope of all the commandments of the law according to 1 Tim. 1. 5. " as also because it exhibits the manner wherein the " other commandments are perfectly done, namely " from love." *

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* Vid. Poli Synops. in loc.

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self ; this cannot intend that they are strictly and formally, but only that they are as it were radically contained therein ; as love is an operative principle, disposing and prompting to all other duties to our neighbour. Or perhaps the original word may only import that the other commands are connected with this as their head, or capital principle : And then the meaning will very much coincide with that of our Savior's words before explained, " On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

But whether this be the full and exact meaning of these expressions or not, certain it is that this passage neither requires nor indeed will bear Mr. H's construction. And so we have considered the whole evidence on which depends the truth of his *major proposition*, " that the divine law enjoins nothing more or less than love." *The assumption*, viz. " The unregenerate have no true (i. e. holy) love to God and their neighbour," we dispute not ; though we cannot admit the reason immediately subjoined, viz. That " unregeneracy consists in want of love, and in consequent exercises of enmity." For it has been shewn to consist in the privation of a holy principle, and not in any act or the privation of any act.

We have now sustained the attack of our author's grand battery ; and have I hope maintained our ground against it. Whether we have not also been able to silence it, and even take it out of his hands, and turn it to good effect against himself, that is, to impugn his own tenet, let such as exercise their reason judge. I doubt Mr. H. trusted a little too much to his pressed forces. Soldiers are very apt to desert a cause, in which they are constrained to serve against their will.

III. We

The third Argument from Rom. ii. 14. 133

III. We will now again resume the labouring oar, and proceed in our present task : That is, to prove that something is required of men in a way of duty which they are able to do while unregenerate. And the next argument is taken from the apostle's words, Rom. 2. 14. " When the Gentiles who have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law to themselves." The design of the apostle in the beginning of this epistle is to prove that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin. But since there is no transgression where there is no law, it might be objected, that the Gentiles not having the law seem not to be guilty of transgressing it. To this the apostle answers, that though the Gentiles have not the written law, yet they have the work or impression of the law of nature on their hearts, in those notions of right and wrong which they are naturally furnished with. This appears, 1. from their conscientiously doing some things contained in and enjoined by the divine law. " Though they have not the law, saith the apostle, they shew forth the work of it, they do many things which it requireth, and forbear or abstain from many things which it forbiddeth, and so shew forth it's work and efficacy."* 2. From the witness of conscience accusing or excusing them, according as their conduct is right or wrong.

That the persons here spoken of are unregenerate cannot be doubted, before not by Mr. H. who ventures to say, that it would not be a wise act in God to regenerate an ignorant heathen, or a very erroneous professor of christianity, without preparing him for this change by a previous use of means.† How competent judges we are of what is wise for God to do

* Owen on Indwelling Sin, chap. 14.

† Serm. on Regen. pag. 56.

do in this case, I enquire not. That these heathen here mentioned were unregenerate is mutually agreed.

Of these persons it is said that they do the things contained in the law. This is the medium or argument by which the apostle proves that they are a law to themselves. The form of expression may seem hypothetical, "*When* the Gentiles do," &c. but the meaning is plainly categorical. q. d. Since the Gentiles do the things contained in the law, it appears that they are a law to themselves. The consequence must stand or fall with it's antecedent.

Now whatever actions are contained in or required by the law, are commanded duties : But by the testimony of Paul, the moral virtues of the unregenerate heathen are things contained in the law, or as *Calvin* renders it, *works of the law* ; * that is, works required by the law. Therefore some actions of the unregenerate are commanded duties. And this, by the way, directly proves that a virtuous life, as well as an attendance on ordinances of religious worship, is the duty of men previous to regeneration.

These things the Gentiles do *by nature*. I do not suppose that these words were meant to exclude all divine influence prompting and assisting the powers of nature to action ; yet they doubtless exclude the influence of supernatural sanctifying grace ; and so leave no room to doubt that the persons spoken of are unregenerate.

But there is an exception to this testimony, that deserves some consideration. The phrase in the original (ta tou nomou) which is here translated "the things contained in the law," is more literally rendered *the things of the law*. And a learned writer † thinks that the meaning of the text is not that the
Gentiles

* Instit. lib. 2. chap. 2. sect. 22.

† Glas's Works, Vol. 3. pag. 25.

Gentiles do any duties contained in, or enjoined by the law ; but that they do “ the offices of the law “ to themselves or the things which pertain to the law “ to do. And this” he says “ is supported by the “ words immediately following, *these having not the “ law are a law to themselves, which shew the work “ of the law written in their hearts.*” - Whether Mr. H. would follow this interpretation of the text I know not ; he having taken no notice of it. However we will attend to it. And,

1. Whereas it is supposed that the following words, “ These having not the law are a law to themselves,” are an evidence that the Gentiles doing the things of the law means their doing the things which the law does, (that is, enjoining duty, forbidding sin, threatening, and condemning the guilty, acquitting the innocent) it appears to me that they are a great objection, and even a full confutation of the sense here given of the text. The design of the apostle is to prove that the Gentiles who have not the law are a law to themselves. And the medium, or argument by which he proves it is their doing by nature the things of the law. Now it is a maxim in logic that the medium by which any thing is proved, must be different from that which is proved by it ; different in sense, as well as in terms ; otherwise the argument will be trifling, merely proving a thing by itself. For instance, it would be trifling for any one to argue in this manner. “ Since the Gentiles who have not the law are a law “ to themselves, therefore these not having the law “ are a law to themselves.” Now to say that a man does the *offices* of the law to himself, is saying no more nor less than that he is a law to himself. We are in no other sense a law to ourselves, than that we do the offices of the law. If this then be what is intended by the Gentiles doing the things of the law, I think
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the apostles antecedent and consequence differ only in terms ; and the argument in the text must amount to no more than this, “ When the Gentiles who have “ not the law do by nature the offices of the law to “ themselves, these having not the law, are a law, “ that is, do the offices of a law to themselves !” Surely St. Paul did not argue at this rate. But if the sense be as our translators have rendered, *doing the things contained in the law*, the argument is clear and pertinent. Mens doing the things required in the law without any knowledge of the written law, is an evidence that they are instead of a law to themselves, and that they have the work of the law written on their hearts.

2. I humbly conceive, that the original word (*poie*) here used is not proper to express the elicited or immanent acts of the mind and conscience, by which alone men are, or do the offices of, a law to themselves. It properly signifies to perform some action. *Aristotle* uses it to express the doing of what are called actions or performances, in distinction from the immanent acts of the soul.* And I think the word is commonly, if not always used in this sense in the new testament. When the conscience of men does the office of a law, this cannot properly be called (*poiesis*) a doing or performance. But to do the things contained in or enjoined by the law is properly expressed by the word here used. It often bears this sense in the new testament, particularly in the verse immediately preceding this under consideration, the doers (*poietai*) of the law unquestionably means the doers of the duties contained in the law. And it ought not to be supposed, without evident reason, that the apostle should immediately use the same word in effect to express a meaning intirely diverse.

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* *Ethic. lib. 6.*

3. The following verse seems much to confirm the interpretation we plead for. "The gentiles," says the apostle, "*shew* the work of the law written in their hearts." How do they shew it? By those actions, no doubt, which he had just mentioned, viz. doing the things contained in the law. Or to use Dr. Owen's words, "They do many things which it requireth, and forbear or refrain from many things which it forbiddeth, and *so shew forth* it's work and efficacy." They shew it as believers do their faith, that is by their works. But such actions as bear no conformity to the impression of the law on mens hearts, do not shew or evidence such an impression. And inward acts of mens minds are not visible.

4. The stream of expositors runs the same way. All our english expositors and divines (except Mr. Glas, from whom I took the objection here considered) so far as I have yet found, follow our translation. With these agree the most eminent foreign divines, particularly *Calvin, Gryneus, Hemingius, Piscator, Alting, Mastricht, Vossius, &c.* besides those referred to in *Pool's Synopsis*. *Origen*, and *Augustine*, among the ancient fathers, I find understood the apostle's words in the same sense. It is worthy of notice, that *Augustine*, though much pressed with this text by the Pelagians, who endeavoured by it to prove that men might attain to true righteousness by the powers of nature, yet in his answer, never intimates that the apostle only means "that the gentiles do the offices of the law," though this interpretation would have been very convenient for his purpose; but acknowledges that, "Their thoughts will thus far excuse them in the day of judgment, that they shall receive a lighter punishment, because by nature
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“ they have in some sort done the things of the law.”* I shall only add, that in the Syriac, which is accounted the most ancient and valuable of all the old versions, this verse is rendred, according to the sense we plead for, as appears by the translation of it in the polyglot bible. It seems that this sense of the apostle’s words which we oppose was unknown in the ancient church. Mr. H. will perhaps think I have been *very wickedly* † employed, in producing the suffrage of the learned respecting the sense of a text. But in matters of criticism, the judgment of the learned, I suppose, is not altogether to be despised, at least by those who are conscious of their own deficiencies.

This exception, being I hope removed, and the true meaning of the text vindicated, our argument from it in support of the point we have undertaken to defend, is now left to the consideration of all impartial enquirers after truth. To me, I confess, the text speaks as home to the point as can be desired.

IV. The words of the evangelist, Mark vi. 20. will furnish us with another proof of the doctrine we plead for. “ Herod feared John, knowing that he “ was a just man and a holy, and observed him, and “ when he heard him he did many things, and heard “ him gladly.” Herod an unregenerate man, not only had a reverence for John Baptist as a righteous man, and heard him gladly, but he did many things which John taught and exhorted him to do. The same things that he heard he did. None can be so wild as to imagine the meaning to be, that Herod did many things contrary to what he was taught ; or merely that he was busy in doing something. “ He “ was

* Ad hoc eos in die judicii cogitationes suæ defendent, ut tolerabilius puniantur, quia naturaliter quæ legis sunt utcunque fecerunt. August. contra Julian. lib. 4. cap. 3.

† Pag. 90.

“ was not only a hearer of the word, but in part a
 “ doer of the work.” * “ Herod did many things
 “ which John in preaching moved him unto.” † Now
 John being full of the Holy Ghost, taught and ex-
 hortated his hearers to do nothing but what was their
 duty. If then Herod did any thing that John ex-
 hortated him to do (the text says he did many things)
 then John exhorted to such duties as may be done
 by an unregenerate sinner. Mr. H. indeed tells us
 that “ John said not a word of unregenerate duties,
 “ but preached and inculcated nothing short of true
 “ repentance.” P. 148. But St. *Mark*, who was
 more likely to know, informs us that he preached
 such duties as Herod practised. And we may now
 fairly return him his own compliment ; “ Mr. H.
 “ and they who join with him are wiser than John
 “ the Baptist ; and if he was wise and right in his
 “ preaching they are not so.” Ibid.

V. Another argument I shall take from Phil. iv. 8.
 “ Finally my brethren, whatsoever things are true,
 “ whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things
 “ are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever
 “ things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good
 “ report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise,
 “ think on these things.” It will perhaps be thought
 that this text is not so pertinently cited in the present
 controversy, being addressed to professed believers
 who for ought that I know were all regenerate. I
 have not cited it because straitned for proofs, but for
 a particular reason, which will presently appear.

Two things are to be enquired into for the opening
 this text, and our argument grounded upon it : viz.
 Whether the hearers of the gospel in general are
 bound by this precept to an immediate attendance to
 the duties here enjoined ? And whether the duties

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are

* Henry.

† Perkins.

are of such a nature, that an unregenerate sinner is able to perform any thing of what is here inculcated ? For the first Mr. H. has happily saved us the trouble of proving it ; he having granted as fully, and more fully than we desire, that the exhortations to duty which in scripture are addressed to the regenerate, bind the unregenerate to obedience, as much as if they had been particularly directed to them.

All that is wanting then in order to form a solid argument to our purpose from this text, is to shew that the unregenerate have a next power to practise these duties ; that is, to speak the truth, to behave justly, temperately, amiably, and in a word, practise those virtues which are of general good report. Now these things are so manifestly in the power of the unregenerate, that no one I think will deny it on any other pretence than this ; that the apostle means only such a practice of these virtues as implies or presupposes a principle of true holiness infused in regeneration.

Now though it be true that men ought to do all these things in the exercise of faith and love, and that the want of holy principles and ends is an essential defect in the most shining virtues ; yet it is carefully to be observed, that it is not a principle of grace that constitutes or denominates mens behaviour true, honest, &c. in the common acceptation of the words. Though a man cannot live in a *holy* manner while unregenerate, yet he can live *justly, temperately*, and speak the *truth*. It is the substance and matter of actions, not their flowing from supernatural principles that constitutes them just, laudable, and of general good report. A man may speak the truth, and deal honestly and behave temperately, and the like, without the grace of regeneration. And these things are the duty of the unregenerate by virtue of this precept.

precept. For *whatsoever* things are true, &c. are strictly enjoined. And it is a beggarly pretence, destitute of any proof from scripture or reason, to say that there is no obligation on any one to speak the truth, and practise the other virtues here recommended, except on supposition of it's being done from a holy principle.

It is not to be allowed to any arbitrarily to suppose, that when only the substance and matter of a duty is expressly enjoined in a scripture precept, there is no obligation on any to do what is enjoined, unless the performance be every way qualified as it ought to be. To omit any requisite circumstances of a duty is a sin, but to omit the substance of the duty also is a double sin. Lying and injustice are in themselves sins abstract from all circumstances. Consequently truth and righteousness are in themselves commanded duties. It is not to be allowed to any arbitrarily to suppose, that when the apostle urges a regard to *whatsoever* things are true without limitation, he means not to exhort men to regard truth, unless on certain suppositions, and with the conjunction of such circumstances, as are not necessary to constitute the virtue of truth, according to the common acceptation of the word, however necessary they may be to constitute an action spiritually good. The scriptures are to be taken according to the common meaning of the words and phrases therein used, unless some weighty reason appear for a singular and appropriate sense.

The practice of moral virtues in men unregenerate is in it's kind good, lovely, laudable. It was on this account that God loved Cyrus. Isai. 48. 14. "God loved Cyrus," says Mr. Pool, "with that particular kind of love which God hath for such men as excel others in any virtues, as Cyrus did. In
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" which sense Christ loved the young man." Mark
 10. 21. " Then Jesus beholding him loved him,
 " Not with a special and saving love," (says Dr.
 Collins, Mr. Pool's continuator) " but he loved him
 " with such a common love as he loveth all his crea-
 " tures with, and especially such as are better than
 " others. All that can be concluded from hence is,
 " that acts of moral righteousness are pleasing to
 " God." It was on account of such virtues as the apo-
 stle recommends that Jesus loved this young ruler. It
 was not merely love of benevolence that is here chief-
 ly intended ; much less pity to him as one peculiarly
 stupid and hardened in pride and enmity against God.
 The pharisees were as proper objects of pity on this
 account as any ; while maliciously watching for some-
 thing to accuse him. But we do not read that be-
 holding them he loved them, but " he looked round
 " with anger being grieved at the hardness of their
 " hearts." His love to this person is commonly
 understood to have been a friendly complacency in
 him, on account of his amiable character and be-
 haviour. In this young man we have a proof and ex-
 ample that a virtuous behaviour is amiable even in
 the unregenerate. Mr. H. indeed gives a different
 account of this matter. " Nor is there any reason,"
 says he, " to think that Christ loved him on account
 " of any thing amiable in his character. He " be-
 " holding him," looking on him as a poor, ignorant,
 " stupid, proud enemy to God, and in a most wretch-
 " ed condition, this excited in him the love of pity
 " and benevolence to him. This I suppose is all
 " that is meant by his loving him." P. 82. What
 " the happy people who shall live in the last days"
 (to whom Mr. H. makes his appeal *) may think of
 this gloss, I shall not pretend to divine. Those who
 live

live in these degenerate times, for what I can yet find, are very generally of opinion that it is neither just, nor even handsomely probable. I shall not however stop to object to it, but return to the point in hand, from which we had almost digressed.

Whenever any external duty is enjoined in scripture, without any limitation of the performance to qualified subjects, or involving the *circumstances* of the external *action* into the *substance* of the *duty*, (as is the case in baptism, the Lord's supper, &c.) There is then a general obligation to perform the substance of the duty, though it should be defective in it's circumstances. Thus external moral duties are immediately and in themselves enjoined on all, whether regenerate or not. Thus when the Israelites were commanded to keep the passover, it was their duty to do it, and in so doing "they did as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron." (Exod. xii. 28.) Though we have no reason to think that the body of the people kept it in a holy manner. When Paul in his voyage to Italy exhorted those who sailed with him to take some meat, because it would be for their health ; though it was their duty in eating to aim sincerely at the glory of God, which as unregenerate many of them were not in a next capacity to do ; yet if any one should say, that the apostle did not mean to invite any to eat while unregenerate, and consequently, that none of this character did any thing that he invited them to do, but directly contrary, when they took some meat ; must we not conclude that such a one had confounded himself, and the plain sense of the scripture, with foolish subtilties ? Common sense would conclude, that what Paul invited them to do, and what the historian says they did, was no more nor less than the natural action of eating simply considered ; an action which neither includes,
nor

nor excludes the exercise of a holy principle ; and that there is no more difficulty in supposing that such kind of actions may be enjoined by God, for wise and good ends ; than that they may lawfully be advised to by a good man. God has a right indeed to require the doing of those things, which without a special direction from him it would not be lawful for any man to order or advise. But who will imagine that men may lawfully advise to the doing of that, which would be inconsistent with the holiness of God to require ? But of this more in the next section. To sum up the matter, when the apostle in this text exhorts to the practice of moral duties, and when in other parts of the new testament men are called to an attendance on the outward means of conversion, is the duty of all those who hear the call of the gospel to perform these duties as to the substance, whether they are in an immediate capacity to perform them in a holy manner or not. That is, it is their duty to do that which an unregenerate sinner is able to do ; which was to be proved. And this is what is meant by those who say that God requires both the performance and the goodness of the duty. Nor is the distinction here suggested, either "*new* * or *unintelligible*" to some, whatever it may be to Mr. H. † whose exceptions, founded on mistaken principles which have been already confuted, might easily be shewn to be of no weight : But I leave them to the consideration of the intelligent reader : And, will finish my observations on this text with one remark, which I have all along had in view.

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* " Works whose *goodness* doth not cleave necessarily to the "*doing of them*, but to the *manner* of doing them wicked men. "*may perform.*" Dr. Edward Reynolds on the sinfulness of sin.

† Pag. 127.

It is a vain and groundless suggestion, that the apostles did not exhort to any thing as matter of duty which the unregenerate are able to perform. To correct this mistake which has been too confidently maintained by some, was my principal design in discussing this text. The apostles often inculcate external duties which the unregenerate are able to perform as to the substance of them. And such precepts oblige the hearers of the gospel in general to such a performance of them as they are capable of, whether regenerate or not; and are to be indiscriminately inculcated on all, to stir them up to endeavours of obedience. We have a good warrant to limit the duties of profession of faith and baptism, to qualified subjects. For it is plain from scripture that the belief of the heart ought always to accompany the confession of the mouth, otherwise it ought not to be made. And says Philip to the Eunuch, proposing to be baptized, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." But what warrant have we from scripture to say to men, "If ye are regenerate and true believers, then ye may and ought to speak the truth one to another, to be just in your dealings, to be temperate and chaste in your behaviour, to read and hear God's word, and pray to him: Otherwise, and without these qualifications, these things are not your duty, nor required at your hands; and all endeavours to do any of these things while unregenerate, are as unwarrantable and presumptuous, as for an infidel to receive the outward seals of the covenant." Let any precept or authentic precedent for such a manner of preaching be produced, and it shall be attended to. In the mean time; we have a warrant to urge an attendance to the precepts of the gospel, without foisting in any limitations or conditions not contained in those precepts. We have a

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warrant to call upon sinners to reform their vicious lives, and attend seriously the means of conversion without delay according to their present ability, whether regenerate or not. We have a warrant to assert that the apostolic writings abound with exhortations to such actions as the unregenerate are able to perform ; to challenge some substantial evidence of those who assert the contrary ; * or else reject it as an arbitrary hypothesis, how importunately soever they may *beg* to have it conceded to them. How much good such exhortations have done, (which Mr. H. is quite sure is but very little †) I enquire not at present.

VI. Another argument may be taken from divers testimonies from the old testament, manifesting God's approbation or favourable notice of the actions of un-sanctified men, when for the substance conformable to his will ; and his rewarding them with temporal blessings, because or on account of them. Thus Jeremiah was sent with this message to the Jews, chap. 34. 15. "Ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour" ; though they soon after fell from it. 2 Chron. 25. 2, 3, 4. "Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." And particularly, in punishing his father's murderers, he "did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses." And of his father Joash it is said, chap. 24. 2. that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada" ; though afterward he fell to idolatry, and put to death the priest who reprov'd him for it. 2 Kin. 10. 30. "The Lord said unto Jehu, because thou hast done well, in executing that which was right in mine eyes,—thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. But Jehu took no heed

* pag. 130.

† pag. 132.

heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart." 2 Chron. 11. 4. "Rehoboam, and the people obeyed the words of the Lord, and returned from going against Jeroboam." And afterwards when he and all Israel were punished for forsaking the law of the Lord, yet when they humbled themselves, "the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, they have humbled themselves, *therefore* i will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance," chap. 12. 7. Ahab's humiliation was favourably noticed by God. "Because he humbleth himself," (saith God) "I will not bring the evil in his days." 1 Kings 21. 25—29. So was the repentance and reformation of the Ninevites. Jonah 3—10. "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them, and he did it not." And this instance is mentioned by our Saviour, as what would in the day of judgment condemn the impenitent Jews. Other instances there are which I stay not to collect.

It appears from these passages that unregenerate sinners have done that which was in some respect *right in God's sight* : Of which he has *expressed his approbation* : Which was *commanded in his law* : Which he calls *obeying his word* : *Because*, or on account, of which he has *averted threatened judgments, suspended punishments, granted temporal blessings* ; even such blessings as imply the *continuance of spiritual privileges*. Now these things cannot be said of any actions, which it was not the duty of such persons to do. And if the unregenerate have done what was their duty in any instances, there is still a power in the unregenerate to do some things which are their duty : And conversely some things are their duty, for the doing of which they have a power.

Mr. H. labours in the fire to defend himself against these plain testimonies, which speak so fully and expressly in opposition to his cause. If he could have submitted his reasonings to the wisdom of God speaking in the scriptures, "I suppose" (to speak in borrowed language) "that a great part of his performance would never have seen the light." P. 6.

His exceptions aim at these two things. 1. To confute the supposition, that the persons here mentioned did any thing of which God expressed his approbation, or took a favourable notice, or out of respect thereto granted any blessings to the persons. 2. Shew that consistent with the denial of all these things, a natural and easy meaning may be put on these texts.

As to the first part of his reply, we will first review the evidence which these texts give to the points by him objected to ; and then examine his objections.

The scriptures declare in express words that persons allowed to be unregenerate, did that which was right in God's sight : According as it is written in the divine law : That they obeyed the words of the Lord : And that temporal favours were promised and granted, *because* of their doing these things. If then it be any *expression of approbation* to tell a person he has done right and well, and promise temporal blessings *because* of such doings ; if this imports taking any *favourable notice* of such performances ; and if bestowing a favour *because* a person has done right, be the same with rewarding it, or bestowing a blessing on account of, or out of respect to such a right conduct ; then none can deny that the unregenerate have done what they were commanded to do, what God expressly approved, took favourable notice of, and rewarded, unless a man will dare contradict the scriptures. Mr. H. has however ventured to do it with
much

much confidence. And though I shall upon the authority of the scriptures hold these things for undeniable facts, and have a right to repel every objection that reason may presume to offer against them ; yet let us hear what is objected.

Says he, " If God granted favours to Ahab and
 " Jehu, and a great deliverance to the Ninevites,
 " *purely* out of respect to their repentance and good
 " deeds, while they were impenitent, &c. then he
 " may and does shew favour to sinners out of respect
 " to what they are in themselves, their exercises and
 " doings, and without any respect and relation to
 " Christ the mediator. Therefore if there was no
 " such mediator, he might shew favours to sinners,
 " take a favourable notice of their doings, and express,
 " &c. his approbation of them ; and *purely* out of
 " respect to this suspend his punishments, and grant
 " them pardon and salvation. For if he grants a less
 " good——out of respect to their character and do-
 " ings, because they have done well,——he may as
 " well grant a greater good, even pardon of sin and
 " eternal salvation out of respect to this.——What
 " need then—of a mediator in order to obtain—
 " the favour of God !" And thus he concludes, " the
 " whole gospel is overthrown, and Christ is repre-
 " sented as dying in vain." P. 73, 74.

It is here to be observed, that Mr. H. to give his consequences the better colour, has foisted in the word [purely] into the antecedent, implying that his antagonist meant to assert, " that God granted temporal
 " favours to unregenerate men because they had done
 " well, without any respect to Christ's mediation." But I find no such thing asserted or intimated by Mr. Mills, or any other differing from Mr. H. on the
 point

point in dispute.* If then we take away the word *purely*, which ought not to have been inserted, the antecedent is in every part fully supported by scripture. Certain it is that "God granted favors to Ahab and Jehu, and a great deliverance to the Ninevites, because of their repentance and good deeds," let men object as they please. That the dispensation of favors to the children of men is founded on Christ's mediation, we have not denied. What christian then shall dare suggest, that if God has done that which his word abundantly assures us he has in fact done, then the gospel is overthrown, and Christ has died in vain. If those unsound consequences drawn out by Mr. H. from the principle he opposes, depend intirely on the supposition that favours are granted to men *purely* because they have done well, without any respect to the dispensation of grace; why has he been at all this pains to confute his own figment, and destroy a man of straw of his own making? His artillery must be better aimed, if he means it should do any execution.

He must not (while he allows the truth of the scriptures) deny that God granted favours to Ahab and Jehu, and a great deliverance to the Ninevites, whatever were the ground or reason of it. And he must say that these favours were granted either out of respect to Christ's mediation, or they were not. Let him chuse his alternative.

If he shall say that God grants favours to sinners through Christ's mediation, takes a favourable notice, and

* Mr. Mills, against whom Mr. H. is disputing, does indeed say that a great salvation was granted to the Ninevites out of respect to their repentance. But who except a wrangler, that seeks a knot in a bulrush, will pretend or suspect that any thing more is intended than if it had been said, in the scriptural phrase, that this favor was granted to them *because* they repented.

and expresses his approbation of their doings ; and if this be not subversive of the gospel ; then neither is our argument : Unless it be inconsistent to suppose that a favour may be granted to men because of their doings, and also out of respect to Christ's mediation. But this cannot be said, unless we will be so profane as to say, that facts expressly recorded in the scriptures are subversive of the gospel. For that God suspended the punishment of Ahab, and promised temporal blessings to Jehu, *because* the one humbled himself, and the other did well in executing that which was right, the scriptures in express words declare.

If he shall say that these temporal favours, and these expressions of divine approbation, are not granted out of respect to Christ ; then his argument will, if it prove any thing, convict himself of overthrowing the gospel. It will condemn himself as much as he supposes that it condemns his opponents ; unless he should say, that it is inconsistent with the necessity of Christ's atonement to bestow favours on sinners because of their doings, without any respect to the mediator ; but not so, to bestow favours on sinners, neither because of their doings, nor out of respect to the mediator. But this surely cannot be pretended. Whether it be more agreeable to divine wisdom, supposing that he grants favours to sinners without any respect to the mediator, to grant them also without any regard to their behaviour, I enquire not. The necessity of an atonement in order to the pardon of sin is no more nor less taken away on the one supposition than on the other. Would it not be as good reasoning as Mr. H's to argue as follows ? " If God by an act of sovereign goodness, without any regard either to the mediation of Christ, or the behaviour of the sinner, may grant a less good, a less deliverance and salvation ; he may as well, in mere sovereign bounty,

bounty, grant a greater good, even the pardon of all sin, and eternal salvation. He may as well remit the punishment of sin forever without any atonement, or any outward reformation of the sinner, as he can suspend punishment for the least moment. What need is there then of a mediator and atonement, &c. And he may be challenged, as boldly as he challenges others, * to shew that it is more inconsistent with the necessity of an atonement for sin, to suppose that God grants favours to sinners because of their reformation, than to suppose that they are acts of sovereign irrespective bounty; all respect to the mediation of Christ being in both cases alike excluded. †

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* pag. 74,

† I wish Mr. H. to consider, whether his way of arguing must not unavoidably lead us to conclude that there is no need of an atonement in order to the pardon of sin. He concludes that it must be allowed as a necessary consequence, that if without respect to the mediator, God may grant a lesser good to a sinner, he may also a greater. If he may suspend the punishment of sin for a time, he may do so forever; and so not punish sin at all. Dr. Twisse argued in this manner against the absolute necessity of satisfaction for sin, as a foundation for it's being forgiven. He concluded that a mitigation and suspension of punishment must be allowed to be consistent with justice; and so argued as Mr. H. has done, that on this supposition, justice does not absolutely and necessarily require that sin should be punished at all. The learned may find this argument answered, in Dr. Owen's latin *Diatriba de justitia divina*, and in Turretine's disputations *de necessitate satisfactionis Christi*; who have shewn, that justice admits of a latitude and variety of dispensation in the punishment of sin: That various manners, circumstances, and degrees of punishing a sin, are alike consistent with justice; and consequently, these things are determined not by justice, but by a wise and holy sovereignty. If the author's consequences are just, I see not but that the *absolute* necessity of the atonement a priori must be given up; which I would however be loth to call a subversion of the gospel, when I find such great and good divines as Augustine, Calvin, Musculus, Twisse, Vossius, Goodwin, Norton, Stoddard, Rutherford, &c. did

The objections to the plain sense of these testimonies being found of no weight, let us now consider the "natural and easy meaning" of these texts, which Mr. H. thinks is not pressed with the intolerable consequences above mentioned. The sum is, "God in his conduct towards these persons aforementioned, and in what he says of them, acts and speaks not as the searcher of hearts, but has respect only to what was visible, to their external appearance and conduct." P. 75.

Ans. 1. That sense of these texts on which our argument is founded, being obnoxious to none of those absurdities with which he charges it, nor any other, for what yet appears; we have a right to call for direct and positive scripture evidence of this hypothesis, before we receive it. Of this, according to my best observation, his book affords nothing. Nor has he told us how it could properly be said of any one, without any respect to his heart, that his *heart*
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did not hold to it. I suppose it will not be thought by any that Christ purchased a suspension and mitigation of punishment for the devils. And yet it is certain that the full degree of punishment to which they are condemned is not at present inflicted on them. They are reserved in chains under darkness, like prisoners, to the judgment of the great day; to which there is a plain reference in their beseeching and adjuring Christ not to torment them *before the time*. Now if our author's argument be valid, we may as well argue in the following manner. If the punishment of the devils may be mitigated and suspended for a time, without any atonement for their sin; it may be mitigated to the utmost supposable degree, and for the longest supposable duration; consequently the punishment of sin may be perfectly remitted, and that forever. What need is there then of an atonement, when the sinner may have a full and everlasting reprieve, equivalent to a pardon without it? The truth is, it belongs not to us to limit the prerogative of the Deity. And they who are so rash as to pretend to do it by reasonings *a priori*, will find that they meddle with things too high for them.

was or was not perfect, upright, &c. when his behaviour was externally right.

2. This hypothesis affords no relief against any of those absurdities with which he supposes our interpretation of these texts to be pressed. The very same objections lie equally against the *principle* on which he proceeds in his exposition. For I ask, how is it, according to Mr. H's reasoning, consistent with the divine purity, and the necessity of an atonement for sin, for God to speak of, and conduct towards men, as if their character and behaviour was right and acceptable to him; having respect only to their external conduct, without searching their hearts. The divine conduct herein is either on account of Christ's mediation, or it is not. If not, then in case there had been no mediator or atonement, God might have spoken of, and conducted towards sinners, as if their actions were right in his sight. He might have taken a favourable notice of their external shews of repentance and reformation. He might have expressed his approbation of them as right in his sight. He might have averted temporal judgments, suspended punishments, promised and granted temporal blessings, *purely* because of, or out of respect to mens visible character, without acting as the searcher of hearts. Not only so, but he might, without searching mens hearts, have forgiven their sins, promised and bestowed eternal life, having respect only to their outward behaviour. And thus there would be no necessity of Christ's dying to purchase these blessings for us, which might all be conferred by God on sinners, acting herein not as the searcher of hearts, but having respect only to what is visible, to their external conduct and behaviour.

But if it be said, that it is only on account of Christ's mediation that God can consistently with his righteousness

gustness speak of, and conduct towards sinners as if they were truly penitent, and had done what was right in his sight; promising and bestowing temporal blessings, not as the searcher of hearts, but having respect only to their external conduct; then we may on this principle as well vindicate our doctrine from his objections, as he can his own hypothesis against the same objections, which lie full as strong against it.

Plainly then, when he will tell us how it can be reconciled with the divine purity to speak of, and conduct towards sinners, not as the searcher of hearts, but merely according to their visible behaviour; and clear his own hypothesis from the consequences he draws from the doctrine he opposes; then I suppose that a man of his discernment, or even half an eye, will easily see that the doctrine he opposes may in the same way be as well vindicated. Methinks it is somewhat odd, first to deny and dispute against *the fact*, viz. that "God expresses his approbation of some actions of sinners, and grants temporal rewards to them because of such actions," and then immediately suppose the same fact, and introduce a scheme to account for it, or shew it to be consistent with the divine perfections, and the truth of the gospel.

3. Allowing our author's interpretation, I would gladly be informed, why it may not be supposed that the divine being may as well act the part of a legislator as of a judge, not as the searcher of hearts, but having respect to mens outward behaviour? In other words, why may he not make laws which respect only the outward actions of men, as well as give judgment, and execute laws, only according to mens outward and visible conduct? Is it not natural to think that the execution of laws ought to correspond with the meaning of them, and of the legislator in them? That promises would not be fulfilled on a condition

intirely diverse from, and even contrary to that which is annexed to them? That a blessing promised to the performance of some duty, or act of obedience, would not be given by a righteous judge to an action implying no duty, or obedience, or any part of it, but the very reverse in a high degree? Does it any more imply God's giving up his right to holy obedience from his creatures, for him to require them to do something, which in itself does not contain whatever is essential to true holiness, than it does to declare his approbation of such an action when done, and bestow blessings on the doer *because* of it? We may have occasion before we have done to remind ourselves of these things. *

* That there may be no ground to suggest, that our author's design has been misrepresented, the reader is to observe. That the argument of Mr. Mills from these passages is designed to prove that the awakened and reformed sinner is less guilty in the sight of God than the stupid profligate. Which is a different point from that which is the subject of our present debate, viz. that some actions of the unregenerate are commanded duties. Mr. H. denies both: And though his direct design be to answer Mr. Mills's argument, yet he has shaped such an answer as, if it concludes any thing to his purpose, will conclude equally against both these points; and indeed more directly against the latter than the former. For he contends, that if God has expressed his approbation and favorable notice of any actions of the unregenerate, promised and granted temporal blessings (purely) because of them, then Christ is dead in vain. It was therefore necessary for us to consider this argument, so far as it is pointed against ours. And accordingly I have endeavoured to shew that his exceptions are either impertinent, if they lie only against the word *purely* which himself has added, or if they lie against the facts as we have stated them, then the scriptures and his own principles are equally obnoxious to his own objections. It is the principle on which both arguments are founded that he objects to, and I defend. But indeed the dispensing of temporal blessings, according to the *real* characters of men, compared with one another, as viewed by the searcher of hearts; and because of their being comparatively better, is no more inconsistent with the necessity of an atonement, than dispensing the

On the whole, when the scriptures declare any actions to be *good and right, according to the commandment of the Lord*, and that the doers are rewarded because of them, this is as sure an evidence that the performance thereof was their duty, as the requirement of them would be. This the scriptures declare of some actions of the unregenerate, which must therefore be concluded to be duties.

VII. The next argument is founded on a principle expressly acknowledged by the author, as well as the generality of professed christians: *That God has encouraged unregenerate sinners to attend the means of grace.* It will here be necessary to shew what is meant by encouragement; the rather because it is said the word is ambiguous, which has misled many in their reasonings on it. * But I have not observed such an ambiguity as is here pretended. Encouragement I think properly signifies *a ground or reason of hope.* It may be used metonymically for the effects and adjuncts of encouragement in the proper sense. If a sick man sees reason of hope that he shall recover, he has then encouragement respecting his recovery. If any one has ground to hope his endeavours will be for his advantage, he has then encouragement to endeavours.

Commands, exhortations, invitations, &c. may be reasons and inducements to obedience, but simply considered they are not encouragements. When they are enforced with a prospect of good to be obtained by

the same blessings according to their visible character, and because they have in some instances behaved aright. I am far from thinking that men are in this world treated according to their real comparative character, or indeed always according to their external conduct. But if it were supposed, it could not be shewn to be inconsistent with the divine purity, or the necessity of an atonement.

by a compliance with them, there is then an encouragement or ground of hope annexed to them. Promises are encouragements : But there may be encouragements which are not promises : There may be other reasons of hope. A divine promise is a ground of sure hope : But if there be only a probable reason to hope for some good, there is then a lower encouragement. There are some encouragements for sinners to hope for salvation which are not connected with any of their endeavours ; such as the divine goodness, the al-sufficient atonement, the absolute promises of mercy. There are other encouragements or reasons of hope to sinners, if they attend on the means of grace ; that is, the greater probability of obtaining salvation in this way. It is on these our argument is grounded.

This may suffice to shew what we mean by encouragement. It is simply a reason of hope. The other sense mentioned by our author * seems to be a mistake. Exhortations are often enforced with encouragements. But exhortations are properly as distinct from annexed encouragements, as commands are from annexed reasons. Be this as it may, it is in this sense we say, and he acknowledges, that God encourages the unregenerate to attend on the means of grace. “ Sometimes,” says he, “ encouragement means that which gives a hope and prospect of success in any business and pursuit.—In this sense God encourages sinners, let their hearts be as sinful and opposite to him as they will, to attend the means of grace.” †

The manner in which God encourages human endeavours is various. Sometimes by promising success ; sometimes by signifying in his word that there is some probability our labour may not be in vain. Thus

* pag. 137.

† *ibid.*

Thus the apostle encourages ministers to instruct opposers in meekness, if peradventure God will give them repentance. * And God having commanded Jeremiah to write the words he had spoken, adds this encouragement to the command, "It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil that I purpose to do to them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity. † And there are exhortations to reformation, which seem to be enforced with this lower degree of encouragement. Daniel exhorted king Nebuchadnezzar to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquity by shewing mercy to the poor, if it might be a lengthening out of his tranquility. ‡ This form of exhortation is not unfrequent in scripture. The words of Peter to Simon of Samaria are perhaps a parallel instance to that last quoted. "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." § God also encourages human endeavours *by examples of success* recorded in his word. The proficiency David made in spiritual knowledge by studying God's word is an encouragement to us to do as he did. The same is suggested from the happy fruits of the Bereans searching the scriptures daily. The numerous examples recorded in scripture of sinners converted, and saints edified by the preaching of the gospel, encourage an attendance to this ordinance. The instances of God's hearing the prayer of saints and sinners are a general encouragement to this duty. The mercy of God to sinners on their humbling themselves, and forsaking their evil courses, is an encouragement to repentance and reformation. Again God encourages our endeavours *when he shews us by our own observation, that they are commonly successful* : And finally *when*

* 2 Tim. 2. 25. † Jer. 36. 3. ‡ Dan. 4. 27. § Acts 8. 22.

when according to the laws of nature they operate as causes or means of advantage to us. Thus men are encouraged to apply themselves diligently to the business of their lawful calling, because such endeavours are naturally conducive to the end at which they aim.

But it seems to be a matter of no great importance in what manner God gives us a ground of hope that our endeavours will probably be of advantage to us. If the encouragement be real, and not a fond presumption, it is a just reason of action laid before us by God, to excite us to it. If we have good evidence that a particular action is our duty, it matters not how we obtained it, whether by the natural light and reason of our own minds, or by supernatural instruction: We are by the authority of God bound to do it. So if we have a just ground of hope that our doing a particular action will be to our real good, this encouragement is a just reason for acting proposed to us by God, to prompt us thereto, in whatever way it is proposed to us.

I now proceed to shew, how it appears from God's encouraging men unregenerate to attend the means of grace, that this is their duty. God never encouraged any one to do that which was not his duty. He never prompts men to do that which ought not to be done, and which is indeed nothing but sin, by giving them a just and real ground of hope that it will be to their everlasting benefit. This we are warranted to assert, not only from the holiness of his nature, but from the plain words of St. James. "Let no man say when he is tempted I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man." * There are two senses in which men are said to be tempted. 1. For the trial or discovery of what is in their hearts, whether they will

* Jam. 1. 13.

from God's encouraging the Use of means. 161

will abide stedfast in the practice of duty, when it will expose them to trouble, and interferes with their worldly interests and enjoyments; or whether they will refrain from sin, when there is a prospect of avoiding the troubles of this life, and obtaining temporal good things by the commission of it. In this sense God is said to tempt or prove men; by putting them in such circumstances, that the practice of their duty shall cost them much self-denial, and the advantages of worldly riches honours and pleasures, shall be apparently on the side of sin; and by permitting satan and wicked men to represent these allurements in a strong light to the mind, to intice and deceive it into a compliance, or otherwise suggest such thoughts as tend to sin. All this may easily be reconciled to the divine purity; since there is no real encouragement given, no just ground of hope, that a consent to the temptation will be of advantage to us in the end. The command of God, with the high sanctions enforcing obedience, are motives infinitely stronger in themselves, than can ever be urged in any temptation. 2. There is another sense in which men are said to be tempted, viz. when inducements or motives to sin are set before them on purpose to persuade them to it. Whoever thus tempts any one, really aims to persuade him to a compliance, and not to prove his integrity. Such a one will accordingly endeavour to propose such inducements as will be most likely to prevail, and effect the design he has in view. In this sense we are tempted by satan and wicked men; but let no man say or think in his heart that he is thus tempted to sin by the holy God. He may put it to our choice whether we will chuse affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: But at the same time he proposes a recompence of reward, to encourage us to

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a firm adherence to our duty ; and lets us know that bitterness and poison are mingled in the cup that solicits our appetite. If God gives men a real and just reason to hope that their attending the means of grace will be for their everlasting advantage ; if “ he has “ so ordered things that this is the most likely way “ to escape the greatest evil, and be happy forever,” and he “ lets men know” it, as our author owns ; * then either what God encourages them to do is their duty, or what they ought to do ; or else he lays before them a most powerful inducement to sin : And that not to prove their integrity, but to persuade them to do that which is in itself mere sin. Mr. H. must on his own principle own that God encourages the unregenerate to sin : That he lets them know that their doing what they ought not to do will probably be for their eternal interest ; that so men might have a just and real (not a deceitful) reason of hope to move them to the commission of it. But must we not then say that this would be tempting men to evil ? Laying before them so strong an inducement, as must and will prevail if duly apprehended and weighed ? And to give the greater efficacy to the inducement, or shall I call it temptation, the operation of the holy Spirit goes with it, to set it home on the heart. These things seem almost too shocking to be mentioned. May any christian admit the supposition, that the divine being has so ordered and constituted things, that any one should have a *reasonable inducement, a real encouragement* to an action, the doing of which is not his duty but utterly and totally sinful ? God forbid. If he has so ordered things that an attendance on the means of grace is the most likely way to escape eternal misery and be happy forever ; and if he has let sinners know it ; this is as certain evidence that an attendance

attendance on the means of grace is their duty, as the sanctions annexed to a divine command are that it is our duty to obey it.

This argument from encouragements Mr. H. seems rather to despise, than endeavour directly to confute. Some things however he has said, which he thinks, if considered, must convince any one that "God may and does encourage his creatures to that in doing which they are utterly sinful." P. 138. This may be taken in two senses. If he means, that the unregenerate are sinners for not doing what they are encouraged to in a holy manner; and that the action in the compound sense is unholy or sinful, as being defective in principle and end; this is nothing to the purpose of answering our argument. We allow and contend for all this. But we say, that when God encourages the performance in itself, or in the divided sense, he does not encourage the sinfulness of the agent, or the sinful defects or irregular circumstances cleaving to the performance. These have no tendency to his advantage. It is the substance of the duty that is the means of good. It is this that God encourages to; and to this sinners ought to attend. If he means, that God encourages men to such actions *the doing of which is sinful*; (which it is incumbent on him to prove if he would answer our argument) I can see nothing, though I have considered what he has said, that makes this appear in the least probable. That the reader may judge for himself, I will lay before him in our author's words the substance of his reply.

"To encourage a person to any particular way of
"conduct is to let him know that this is the most
"hopeful way to miss of the evil he dreads, and ob-
"tain what he sets up as the object of his pursuit, be-
"that what it will.—In this sense God encourages

" men, let their hearts be as sinful and opposite to
 " him as they will, to attend on the means of grace.
 " He has so ordered things, that this is the most
 " likely way to escape the greatest evil, and be happy
 " forever. So that when they come to view things
 " in any measure as they are, and are above all things
 " afraid of eternal destruction, and desirous of future
 " happiness, they will be induced from a principle of
 " self-love or selfishness, even that very principle that
 " sets their hearts against God, and leads them into
 " all the wickedness they practise, with great care and
 " anxiety to attend on these means. The whole en-
 " couragement as laid before them lies in it's being
 " the most hopeful way to promote their interest, and
 " answer the end which they are pursuing." P. 137.

Here indeed something is asserted ; but how it
 weakens our argument, or proves that men are en-
 couraged to that the doing of which is sin, I do not
 see : Unless the meaning be, " that God lets men
 know that attending the means of grace will proba-
 bly secure their happiness, at the expence of his own
 glory, and the interest of the universe : " Which how
 wild and extravagant an assertion soever it may seem
 is really implied in his scheme. For he holds that
 selfishness is the only principle of action in the unre-
 generate : That this principle is in it's own nature
 enmity to being in general : That it is directly oppo-
 site to benevolence : That the end it proposes is op-
 posite to the interest of being in general : That the
 unregenerate have no conception or desire of true
 happiness. These things he inculcates abundantly.
 Now if we compare these things with what he has
 said about God's encouraging an attendance on
 means, this must appear to be the sum of his doctrine,
 " Though the end which unregenerate sinners aim at
 be directly opposite to the interest of being in general ;
 though

though the object they are pursuing be not true happiness or salvation ; yet God has so ordered things, that he lets them know that there is encouragement, or ground of hope, that by attending the means of grace they may obtain what they set up as the object of their pursuit ; however opposite to his own glory, to the good of being in general, and their own true happiness. Though they are aiming at the worst end which can possibly be imagined ; and acting from a principle directly opposite to benevolence, yet when they come to see things in any measure as they are, they find *a real ground of hope*, that by attending on the means of grace they shall carry their point. And this view of the case being exactly suited to touch and work upon their enmity against God and being in general, which is the only principle of action they have, whereby they can in their present state be prompted to do any thing, hence they are moved with care and anxiety to attend on means." If this be the truth of the matter I own our argument must fall, but if it does it will carry away with it that apostolic maxim on which it is grounded, and even the pillars of revealed and natural religion, leaving us afloat in the dismal abyss of manicheism or atheism.

VIII. That it is the duty of the unregenerate to attend the means of grace will further appear, if we consider the ends for which the ordinances of the gospel were instituted, and it's precepts revealed to, and enjoined on, the children of men. This important argument I will endeavour to open distinctly in the order following.

I. Duties are enjoined in the word of God in order to some end besides or beyond the bare performance of the actions required. They are required not barely as debts or duties, but as means designed, and fitted to subserve the ends and purposes of divine wisdom
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and goodness. This is especially evident with respect to the means of grace. Thus an attendance to the word of God is enjoined, as the means of obtaining divine knowledge, faith, conversion, sanctification, consolation and the like : Consideration is enjoined, as a means of escaping destruction : Prayer, as the means of obtaining needed blessings temporal and spiritual : Striving, as the means of obtaining an entrance into the strait gate : Seeking the Lord, as the means of finding him : Labouring for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, as the means of obtaining it. In this respect the precepts of divine revelation, founded on the dispensation of grace, differ from the injunctions of the law of nature. This requires duties merely as right, or because due. That requires them in order to certain ends, which the wisdom and goodness of God has connected with them, and designs by means of them to accomplish.

2. Such an attendance to duties, as unregenerate sinners are capable of, may and does answer some of those ends, for which these duties were enjoined in the word of God. God had various ends in view in the institution of religious ordinances, and giving out his commands to mankind ; some of which respect believers alone, some respect those who are to be regenerated and effectually called, and some the world of mankind in general. By means of these precepts he designed to restrain the outbreakings of wickedness in the unregenerate ; to direct and influence them to the practice of those virtues, whereby they might be useful to others in the world, and obtain those temporal comforts and advantages which he is willing they should here enjoy. And he designed especially that those who are in due time to be effectually called, who by nature are equally depraved with the rest of the world, might, while in their unregenerate

generate state, be in some measure restrained from the full indulgence of their lusts. When they are ready to rush into such courses, as without a miraculous interposition would undo them, and cast them out of the reach of divine mercy, in the ordinary ways in which God is pleased to exercise it; then the command meets their conscience like a flaming sword, and turns their course. In this manner they are in some sort bound to their good behaviour, and kept within reach of those means, by which they are at length recovered from darkness to light, and from the power of satan to God. And by thus bearing God's yoke, though with the spirit of bondage, they are in some manner trained to it, and fitted to walk and work in it the better when they receive the spirit of adoption. *

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- * This use of the divine commands, is well represented by the great Calvin, as follows. "Sed tamen hæc coacta expressaque
 "justitia," &c. That is in english, "This forced and extor-
 "ted righteousness is yet necessary for the public community of
 "mankind, the peace whereof is hereby consulted, while care
 "is taken that all things might not run into confusion, which
 "would be the case, if all were left at their full liberty. Be-
 "sides, it is not unuseful to the children of God to be under
 "this discipline, while before their vocation, being destitute of
 "the spirit of sanctification, they are wanton in carnal folly.
 "For while through dread of divine vengeance they are with-
 "held from external profligacy, although being as yet unsub-
 "dued in their minds they make small advances for the present,
 "yet they are in some measure accustomed to bear the yoke of
 "righteousness; that when they are called they might not be
 "altogether rude and novices to discipline, as to a thing they
 "are unacquainted with. This office or use of the law the a-
 "postle seems properly to have touched, when he declares,
 "that the law was not made for a righteous man, but for the
 "unrighteous and disobedient, &c. 1 Tim. 1. 9. For he
 "shews that it is a restraint on the triumphant lusts of the flesh,
 "which would otherwise run at large beyond measure. Some
 "have need of a curb to hold them in, that they may not so
 "give the reins to their carnal wantonness as utterly to cast off
 "all

To prepare those for regeneration who are in due time to be the subjects of this grace, to keep them in a diligent attendance to those means whereby God is wont to ingenerate faith and repentance in the hearts of his elect, is one end for which an attendance on these means is prescribed to the hearers of the gospel. They are therefore commanded to search the scriptures : To hear the preached word : To pray for the pardon of sin ; and for the holy Spirit, for all those purposes (I suppose) for which he is ordinarily bestowed ; one of which is to be the efficient principle of regeneration and conversion : To strive to enter in at the strait gate : To consider the issue of impenitent wickedness, lest God tear them in pieces : To labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life. By these and such like commands, which God has in his word directed to the hearers of the gospel in general, without limiting them to qualified subjects, he impresses their consciences with a conviction, that an attendance to these means is

“ all regard to righteousness. For where the Spirit of God
 “ doth not yet rule, there lusts sometimes boil forth in such a
 “ manner, that there may be danger lest they sink the mind
 “ subject to them into forgetfulness and contempt of God.
 “ And this would be the case, if the Lord did not make use of
 “ this remedy against it. Those therefore whom he hath ap-
 “ pointed to inherit his kingdom, if he doth not immediately
 “ regenerate, he keeps unto the time of his visitation by means
 “ of the law under fear ; not indeed that holy and pure fear
 “ which ought to be in his children, but such as is useful to
 “ this purpose, that they may be trained up to true piety,
 “ according to their present capacity : For whoever have
 “ lived any time in ignorance of God, will confess that
 “ this has happened to them, that by the curb of the law they
 “ might be held in some kind of fear and obedience to God,
 “ till being regenerate by the spirit they might begin to love
 “ him.” Instit. Lib. 2. Cap. 7. Sect 10, 11. See also
 Turretines Instit. loc. xi. quæst. 22, Sect. 9. Alting. loc.
 commun. part 1. loc. 7.

is their present duty, whether they are regenerate or not ; and that a neglect of such attendance, according to their present light and ability, will be an act of high disobedience and contempt of God, and most dangerous to their own souls ; so that they dare not live in the neglect of these means. And when they are tempted to cast off fear, and return to their former courses ; they are bridled and kept back by these commands, and influenced, notwithstanding the reluctances of their vain inclinations, to continue in the use of the common means of conversion.

All who maintain that there is ordinarily a work of illumination and conviction, preparatory to regeneration, hold that this is wrought in the soul, in and by a serious attendance to the means of grace. It is also by attending to these means that the first acts of spiritual life are drawn and put forth. The ordinances of the gospel were designed to awaken humble and prepare men for the grace of regeneration ; to be instrumental of working faith in them, whereby they are first savingly united to Christ. Now that attendance on means whereby men are prepared for regeneration, must of necessity be previous to it. That attendance whereby faith is first obtained, cannot be an act of acceptable obedience, according to the new covenant ; since faith is implied in every act of gospel holiness. Such an attendance on means then as goes before regeneration and conversion, may and does answer an important end for which the ordinances of the gospel were instituted.

That these commands, enjoining on the hearers of the gospel an attendance on the means of grace, were given to excite the unregenerate as well as others to serious endeavours of obedience, may be argued from God's making use of these commands to keep them waiting on him in the way of his blessing. For
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if there be any weight in the common argument from final causes, we may justly argue that these commands were given with a design to answer all those wise and good ends, to which they appear so well adapted, and to which daily experience shews that they are ordinarily applied. Therefore,

3. Since such obedience to these commands as the unregenerate are capable of yielding, answers some of those ends for which these commands were given ; it appears that such obedience is enjoined in and by them. For a command has no power or tendency to influence the conduct of men, otherwise than by binding them to such a behaviour on their peril. It is no otherwise fitted to restrain the wickedness of sinners, and prompt them to a laudable and useful behaviour, than by forbidding the one, and enjoining the other. It is a conviction of duty imprinted on the conscience by the command, and of the danger of going presumptuously contrary to it, that binds men to their good behaviour. It was then one design of God's promulging those precepts which have been mentioned, to impress the hearers of the gospel in general with a conviction that it is their duty to attend to them, according to their present ability ; and by this conviction to put the unregenerate as well as others upon endeavours of reformation, and an attendance on the means of conversion, as has been declared. We must therefore either say that these commands require such endeavours of obedience in the unregenerate, as they were designed by God to produce ; or else we must say that God in giving these commands designed that they should be instrumental unto the reformation of mens lives, and to excite and keep them in an attendance to the means of grace, by imprinting a false and deceitful conviction of duty on the consciences of the unregenerate. But since it is
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so necessary on various accounts that men should think it to be their duty to reform their lives, and attend the means of conversion, though unregenerate; and without such a conviction some of the wise and good ends of God's giving men these commands cannot be answered by them: Why do any seek to persuade unregenerate sinners that these things are not their duty, and so as much as in them lies frustrate God's wise and good designs? If any imagine themselves to have found that these designs of divine goodness and wisdom are carried on by delusion, I should think they had acted more advisedly to have kept such discoveries to themselves.

I do not find that our author has directly attempted to answer this argument from the end of God's prescribing duties to the unregenerate, something however I find capable of being framed into an objection; which is therefore to be considered.

It is said, that supposing the command of God required an attendance on means previous and preparatory to regeneration, "and the sinner should be urged hereto from this consideration, it would not have the least influence upon him, or be any motive to him to comply. He is by the supposition only seeking his own interest, and cares nothing about God or duty to him, in themselves considered, or for their own sakes." P. 149. Therefore it seems it would be in vain for God to make use of commands, to influence the conduct of such persons.

Ans. 1. The commands of God carry other motives of obedience with them, besides the will and authority of the great legislator. They are enforced with most important sanctions, which were designed to have their influence into the conduct of men. Our author says that "the authority of a law lies wholly in the threatening." This indeed is a grievous mistake.

Yet on the other hand it must be owned, that the threatening is one reasonable inducement to comply with it's requirement. Men often submit to the will of the higher powers, for wrath, as well as for conscience sake. A servant will obey his master's commands if he fears the effects of his displeasure; though he may not love him, or have any regard to his will considered simply in itself. The commands God gave to the Israelites had an influence on the behaviour of those whose hearts were not right with him. As soon as men know that they are commanded to do any particular actions, they may know that it is not safe for them to disobey. Is it not strange that men should at one time say (in effect) that the threatening is the only thing that binds men to obey the laws of God; and at another time, that the command of God can have no influence on those who are moved only by it's sanctions? It is not in vain to press the commands of God on sinners, to move them to a compliance with their duty, if any thing essential to the commands (as the sanctions are allowed to be) tends to move them to a compliance.

2. It will be impossible to convince those, who view things in any measure as they are, that such a conduct as is not their duty has any probable tendency to promote their final interest. It would be a most irregular constitution of things, unsuitable to the wisdom and holiness of God, if that which was directly contrary to duty, the doing of which was mere sin, should have such a direct tendency to promote a man's final and eternal interest, as that he should have a reasonable encouragement to do it. I know sin may be overruled for good; but I deny that the word or providence of God holds forth any encouragement to do what is simply evil, that good may come to the evil doer. However then sinners may disregard the consideration

consideration that such a conduct is their duty, yet it will be impossible for us on good grounds to persuade them, that it will probably be conducive to their final good, unless we can assure them that it is agreeable to their duty. Otherwise this doctrine must be maintained, viz. That "sin is through the divine interposition an advantage to the sinner, AND THIS IS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO IT." Mr. H. *in his great wisdom* (to compliment him again in his own stile *) *has devised this method of treating with sinners*, to encourage them to attend on means, though it be not their duty, and though their doing so is mere sin, by *persuading* them that this will be for their final interest. *In this he is guilty of the absurdity of supposing* that a man may have just reason to think it will be for his final advantage to do that, the doing of which is sin.

3. There is in human nature a moral sense, which perceives the fitness and beauty of a creature's being obedient to the commands of it's creator and rightful sovereign. There is such a sense of duty imprinted on mens consciences, from a natural view of the excellency greatness and majesty of God, as disposes them to some kind of obedience to his will, though destitute of a spiritual discernment and taste. It is therefore Mr. H's supposition, not ours, that the unregenerate act merely from self-love. But this matter has been before considered.

Corollary. When a divine precept enjoins any human performances or endeavours as means in order to some further end, such a manner of performance as is adapted to subserve the end proposed is thereby enjoined, however short it may fall of what we are in duty obliged to. It is certain that such doings as are very defective and worthless considered as duties, may

may be useful and important considered as means. The design and direct meaning of such commands as require the use of means, is rather to be determined from a due consideration of the ends to which such means have relation, and what a manner of performance is fit to answer such ends, than from considering what is the whole of our duty in this matter, and in what manner we must behave, in order to answer fully our obligations. Such a manner of attending means as is sufficient for those ends for which they are principally enjoined, may not be sufficient to acquit us, as having fully discharged our duty. When God commanded the Israelites to go forward when the Egyptians had pursued them to the red sea, his direct design was to prescribe a means of their deliverance from the enemy. And when we consider the end for which he so commanded them, we must conclude the meaning was, that they should go forward according to their present ability, though he knew that they were a rebellious generation. And though they would not obey in the manner they ought, unless they did it in the exercise of perfect love to and trust in God; yet they might obey in such a manner as to answer the end for which they were ordered to proceed, without any exercises of holy trust or love. And we may truly say, as the scriptures do in like cases, that they did as the Lord commanded them; they did what was their duty, and what they were required to do, according to the true meaning; at the same time that they did not act from such holy principles, and for such holy ends as they ought to have done. So when Christ commanded the multitudes to sit down that he might feed them, we justly conclude from the end for which he so ordered them, that his meaning was that they should put themselves in a convenient order to have food distributed among them.

them, whether they truly believed on him or not. And when they sat down, though many of them no doubt in unbelief, they obeyed his orders in their true meaning ; and the direct end of his so ordering them was answered, though they did not do all that was their duty. So when believers are commanded to shew forth their faith by their works, to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, to work out their salvation, we justly conclude, that these precepts require such sincere though imperfect endeavours of obedience as they are capable of in this life. For such endeavours are well fitted to answer the ends for which they are required, though they are never conducted in all respects as they ought to be. And in like manner the endeavours of the unregenerate in attending on means, are adapted to answer the ends for which they are required so to do. And the true and primary meaning of those commands which prescribe the use of such means to them, is to be estimated from the ends for which such an attendance is prescribed : And it must be concluded such a manner of attendance as is conducive to such ends is required, how far short soever it may be of a discharge of their whole duty. If nothing short of a full and perfect discharge of duty were prescribed as the means of obtaining spiritual or temporal blessings, such means would be so high above the reach of man in his depraved state, that he never could hope for any advantage from endeavours to use them, though it be his own fault that he does not perfectly fulfil his duty.

But for the further illustration and vindication of this argument, and of the evidence it gives to the point in hand, some scripture precepts which we have had occasion to mention must be further attended to.

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The words of our Savior to the Jews, of whom he testifies that they would not come to him that they might have life, are in this view worthy of notice. "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." *

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* Joh. 5. 39. It is objected by Mr. H. that the text in the original may as well be rendred indicatively, *ye do search*; that this sense is thought to be countenanced by the following words, *and ye will not come to me that ye might have life*; and that it is preferred by most of the noted critics on the original; in proof of which Pool's Synopsis is referred to.

This may be of weight against our making use of this text in the present dispute; but it will not really weaken our argument, which way soever it may be understood; since there are other texts not liable to this exception, as full to our purpose as this is according to the English translation. Our Author allows enough for our purpose in his observations on this text. The force of our argument depends on other points of more importance than this criticism. And therefore I have chosen to cast my remarks on this point into the margin, that they might not interrupt our attention to other matters.

It is true the word (*ereunate*) is the same in the indicative and imperative mood. Yet I think as much and more may be said in favour of our English translation, than for the other reading. Mr. H. mentions the next following words as favouring the sense by him proposed. The reader must judge for himself. I cannot see much if any thing in it. He says further, that most of the noted critics translate it indicatively, and refers us to Pool as an evidence. But Pool says no such thing. He quotes four or five that have so rendred it. And he quotes as many who have rendred it imperatively. And I suppose, from what I have observed, that the greater part of modern expositors and divines take it in the same sense. It is well known to those who have read the controversies betwixt the protestants and papists, that this text is commonly improved to shew that the people ought to search the scriptures. The learned Piscator, though he renders the word indicatively, yet he not only allows the other way of rendring it, but makes this notable concession in favour of it. "It must be confessed that the verb at first sight seems to be put in the imperative mood; since the pronoun (*humeis*) is not prefixed, as indeed it ought to be

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Our argument from this text is as follows. Searching the scriptures is an instrumental duty, conducing not only to the edification of believers, but also to prepare men for the state of regeneration, to instruct awaken and humble sinners, and by the blessing of God ingenerate faith in their hearts. It is an ordinance designed, and ordinarily blessed by God for the conversion of sinners, and for producing in them those preparatory dispositions which usually make way for this great change.

When therefore our Savior directed the Jews to search the scriptures, it is not to be doubted, but he prescribed this as a means in order to those ends, to which an attendance to this ordinance is ordinarily conducive; and primarily for those purposes which were in the first place necessary to be answered, in order to their being savingly benefited by them. And as they appear to have been not only unregenerate, but in a great measure unprepared for the exercises of repentance and faith, being filled with prejudices against Christ, and insensible of the sinfulness and danger of their present state; it was in the first place necessary that they be led into juster apprehensions of things, that they be awakened, and convinced of their need of a spiritual physician; and made to attend more seriously to the evidences of Christ's divine mission. This was the first step towards their obtaining a sav-

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“ (to the indicative) according to the custom not only of the
 “ Greeks, but Hebrews, whose manner of expression is usual
 “ with John, and the other apostles.” Comment. in loc. It
 was taken imperatively by the ancients, particularly by Irenæus,
 Origen, Chrysostom, learned Greek fathers; as also by Augustin:
 and in the most ancient Syriac version. Our translators there-
 fore seem to have had good reason for rendering the word in
 this manner. And I have accordingly chosen to follow their
 translation. But if it should be thought precarious, our argu-
 ment may be well maintained without it, as will soon appear.

ing knowledge of him as Mediator, in order to which they are directed to search the scriptures. It must not be thought that Jesus in directing the Jews to the use of means, in order to their coming to the saving knowledge of him, should wholly overlook the first or next end, to which the means he prescribed were ordained; and have respect only to a remoter and consequent end, which cannot ordinarily be attained without the intervention of the former. If a preparatory work of awakening and conviction, by means of the scriptures, was needful in order to their believing on him to salvation; then this was the primary or next end for which he directed them to search the scriptures. And if they were unbelievers, it was first necessary that they obtain faith by attending to the scriptures, before they be thereby edified and confirmed in faith. In short, Christ directed them to search the scriptures for every necessary and useful purpose which they are fitted to subserve, that they might be saved through faith in him. But an attendance to the scriptures is conducive to valuable purposes previous to regeneration and faith: These are therefore respected, and that primarily and immediately, when the unregenerate and unbelievers are called upon to attend this duty.

Now whoever exhorts others to search the scriptures as the means of preparing them for the grace of regeneration, and ingenerating faith in them, must necessarily mean such an attendance to this ordinance as they are capable of previous to regeneration and faith. For as the means must in nature go before the end, so whoever directs to any action or endeavour, *as means*, cannot without manifest absurdity intend such endeavours as contain or presuppose the end for which they are appointed. This would be, as if a physician should prescribe such means in order
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to recover his patient to health, as cannot possibly be used unless he is first in good health. Besides, there is nothing in the expression here used that would lead any one to suspect, that such an attendance and no other must be intended, as presupposes regeneration and faith in Christ; or in short any other manner of searching the scriptures than they had a present or next power for, though unbelievers. * On the whole, it appears to have been our Savior's design, to persuade the Jews to search the scriptures diligently according to their present light and ability, though unregenerate. And he enforces his exhortation with a reason, which was suited to persuade those who believed not on him to an immediate compliance, viz. because they thought the scriptures contained the words of eternal life. And this is a further evidence, that the duty here prescribed was what they might be persuaded to, while unregenerate and unbelievers.

Our Savior's words, Luk. 13. 24. are another proof that the unregenerate ought to give an earnest attendance to the means of conversion. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you shall seek to enter in and shall not be able." Our author endeavours to prove that by the strait gate is meant the entrance into heaven, and not the entrance into a state of grace or holiness. Striving, he says, in scripture signifies the exercises of true christians. But it does not appear that striving bears this appropriate sense more than seeking. He says further, that the unregenerate never truly strive for what they do not truly desire. But this will equally conclude against seeking what they do not desire. Yet the

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* This is fully granted by Mr. H. when he says, the word in the text may as well be translated indicatively "ye do search;" unless he shall say that the same word necessarily means a holy act in the imperative mood, and an unholy act in the indicative.

text says that many will seek in vain to enter in at the strait gate. Other reasons are mentioned (and more are in reserve) which seem not to be conclusive. However I see no necessity of contending about this matter. But I say, if our Savior exhorts the hearers of the gospel to strive for salvation, then he exhorts to all those endeavours which are ordinarily needful and subservient to this end. For the word *strive*, meaning no more than earnest endeavour, is to be understood as including all necessary endeavours. Now some endeavours in the use of means are ordinarily necessary previous to regeneration and conversion. For Mr. H. owns that it is in the way of diligent and painful attendance on appointed means that men are usually prepared for regeneration, and are enabled and persuaded to turn to God by faith in Christ. This is that striving which it is in the first place necessary that an unregenerate sinner be persuaded to in order to salvation; and therefore the exhortation in the text, as addressed to such, primarily enjoins that striving which is in the first place necessary for persons of this character; that is, such endeavours as are in order to regeneration and conversion, and so are in nature previous thereto. When a series of endeavours of a different kind are in their place and order all necessary and conducive to a certain end, not only the last link of the chain, which is immediately connected with this end, but all the other links whose connection with it is more remote are really of the nature of means in order to it. And any one directing to the use of means in general in order to such end, must be understood to direct to the whole series of necessary means, in their proper place; and primarily to that the use of which is in the first place necessary, though but mediately and remotely, and perhaps in itself not infallibly connected with the end proposed.

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The design of this exhortation is to excite the hearers of the gospel to strive without delay, before the door of heaven is shut against them. Many of these are unregenerate ; who must therefore either defer striving until they are regenerate, or they must strive in such a manner as they have a present power to do. True it is, that their inability to act in a holy manner does not excuse the defective manner of their attendance on means ; and they ought to be humbly sensible of it. But it is as true, that in their present state they will not and cannot attend on means otherwise than in a defective manner. And shall their inability to do their duty in a holy manner, which is itself culpable, cause that it shall not be their duty to do it at all, unless they do it in a holy manner ? No surely. “ Do the thing as far as you can, (says Mr. Shepard) else if you owe another a debt, you will not pay, because not for a good end.” * Such a defective manner of attendance on means is in its place useful and necessary, to restrain men from many sins, to prevent a stupid disregard of their eternal interests, a profane contempt of God and religion, to keep them in the ordinary way of God’s blessing, to prepare them for the state of regeneration, with the consequent duties of the christian life. It appears then well worthy of divine wisdom and goodness to command and encourage such endeavours, which however defective and worthless, considered as duties, are in their place subservient to the designs of his mercy.

To the same purpose are our Savior’s words to the Jews, who followed him because they had eaten of the loaves. Joh. 6. 27. “ Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.” These words I have elsewhere explained to this effect. The meat which endureth to

* Parable of the ten Virgins, part 1. chap. 7. sect. 5.

to everlasting life is the same with the bread of life mentioned ver. 35. And this is Christ; who is so called by an expressive metaphor, because he is the object of a christian's faith, that faith by which he lives, which is as it were his daily food. To labour for this food which nourishes the soul to everlasting life, is to use the appointed means for obtaining a saving knowledge of and faith in Christ, with union to and interest in him. * To this the unregenerate are exhorted. An attendance on all the means which God has appointed, and encouraged sinners to use that they may obtain this bread of life, is here enjoined. Now there is an attendance on means ordinarily necessary to prepare sinners for the work of regeneration, to give them the first knowledge of Christ, and so persuade and enable them savingly to believe on him, and turn to God through him. As therefore the word *labour* properly signifies any kind of endeavours, it must be understood to include all those endeavours in the use of means, which are necessary, or any way conducive to the end proposed; as well those which are previous to regeneration and conversion, as those which are afterwards to take place. Yea those endeavours are

- * Dr. Collins in the continuation of Pool's annotations (which I had not consulted when I wrote what is here referred to.) understood the phrase in a larger sense. "Under the notion of that meat which endureth to everlasting life (says he) unquestionably cometh whatsoever is necessary by God's revealed will, that we may have in us the hopes of glory here and may actually enter into that glory hereafter. Such as are first, the knowledge of the gospel, then believing of it, and the acceptance of that Savior, and way of salvation, which God hath revealed for lost sinners, and that holiness of life which God hath made necessary to it." Though I see no sufficient reason to correct the sense I formerly gave of these words, yet if any should think the exposition of this learned author is to be preferred, our argument from the text would suffer no disadvantage either in respect of strength or plainness.

are primarily intended, which are in the first place proper for persons in the state of those Jews here spoken to ; that is, such endeavours as are preparatory to regeneration and conversion. *

In the same manner we might argue from other texts : But these are I suppose sufficient, unless our author's exceptions should be found heavy enough to turn the scale against us. Let us then attend to them. Says he,

I. " Our

* In my sermons from this text, I had argued, that Christ exhorted the unbelieving Jews to endeavours in order to obtain faith in him, and therefore since the use of means is in nature prior to their end, it must be concluded that he exhorted to such endeavours as unbelievers were capable of. It was some surprize to me to find that Mr. H. had so intirely mistaken my design, which I then thought, and still think, was obvious enough, as to represent the argument in this absurd light ; " that because these Jews were disinclined to any thing truly good, therefore they were not exhorted to any thing contrary to their present inclination ;" like which there is nothing from the beginning to the end of the book he has in view, which acknowledges and supposes, that sinners may be and are commanded to do that for which they have neither a present inclination nor habitual power. And though I have endeavoured to prove that an attendance on the means of grace is enjoined on the unregenerate by the divine command, yet I never argue their obligation to such an attendance as they are capable of while unregenerate, *merely* because the command is directed to such persons, or because the duty is enjoined on such ; but I argue from their obligation to comply with each part of the duty separately, as well as with the whole in all it's circumstances conjunctly. I argue from the end to which the duties here exhorted to bear the relation of means ; and the absurdity of involving the end in the prescription of means in order to it. It may be the present duty of a man to be possessed of the end, for the obtainment of which he is required to use means. But it would be absurd to prescribe the end as the means of itself. When our author comes to see that his flourish took it's rise from a too gross mistake of his own, it will I hope lead him to some useful, though perhaps not very pleasant reflections.

1. "Our Savior does not direct the Jews to search the scriptures with all their prejudices, and in the exercise of enmity against him, and with a desire and design to prove from them that he was an impostor." P. 128. And the same answer is equally applicable to what has been said from the exhortations to labour, and strive, &c.

Answer. Our Savior did not direct the Jews to be prejudiced against him, and hate him, while searching the scriptures. Nor did he direct them to be unregenerate or unbelieving. But that he exhorted them to search, and strive, and labour according to their present ability, notwithstanding their unbelief, unregeneracy, and even prejudices and enmity against him, we have good reason to conclude; since their serious attendance to these things appears to be a very fit means of removing their prejudices and enmity against him, and by the blessing of God leading them to a true knowledge of and faith in him. We have not the least shadow of evidence that he thought an attendance on means could be of no advantage to deliver them from their prejudices and evil dispositions. What reason have we then to doubt, but that the removal of these impediments to their conversion, so far as they really took place in the minds of his hearers, was one end, for which he directed them to the use of means? And then we may be sure that he did not intend solely or primarily such an attendance as implies or presupposes the removal of all these impediments.

It is added, "They ought to have searched the scriptures with a heart ready to embrace and practise the truth." (Who doubts it?) "And therefore our Savior doubtless enjoins this [only] upon them." This consequence we must deny, until our author shall make it appear, that such precepts

as injoin an attendance on the means of grace *undoubtedly* require nothing short of sinless perfection, as necessary to those ends for which they are prescribed, for this is no more than mens duty. Until then I shall hold it as a sure maxim, that such actions as are very defective, and fall far short of that perfection which they ought to have, considered as duties, may yet be very useful as means, and well adapted to answer important purposes in subserviency to the conversion and salvation of men. And therefore when the scriptures direct men to duties, as means of obtaining spiritual or temporal blessings, we ought not to think that the means prescribed as necessary to these ends must needs include a perfect conformity to the law in all respects, (though this is no more than our duty) but such a performance of duties as is fit to subserve these ends is, I should think, *doubtless* prescribed, though much short of what we ought to do. If I should say, that men ought to search the scriptures and perform other duties with a sinless perfection of love and obedience to God, and therefore our Savior doubtless enjoins nothing short of this, as the means of coming to the knowledge of him as mediator; which he knew no man would ever do in this state of imperfection; and so proceed to cashier unregenerate and regenerate endeavours together, would it not be as good reasoning as this of Mr. H's?

But it is further pleaded, "when Christ tells them
"to search the scriptures, he directs them to do it
"disposed and inclined to do the will of God, and
"not with a disposition directly opposite to that
"which was necessary in order to answer the end
"proposed." That such a search of the scriptures is intended as was necessary & conducive, in it's proper place, to answer the end proposed, I readily grant. But that a regenerate heart in searching the scriptures, and

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attending the other means of grace, is not necessary in order to their answering some good purposes, in suberviency to mens coming to the knowledge of Christ as mediator, (which Mr. H. grants was the end for which Christ directed to search the scriptures) has been I suppose proved; and is upon the matter conceded by those who allow that there is a preparatory work to regeneration, wrought in the soul by means of the word of God.

Our author's first exception is, I would hope, now removed. But if this fails, he has another at hand. Says he, "When Christ directs and commands to seek
"first the kingdom of God, and labour for the meat
"that endures to everlasting life, he doubtless directs
"to that seeking and labour by which men will cer-
"tainly obtain what they seek and labour after." P. 128. And in another place he says, "It seems to
"me very dishonourable to Christ, and contrary to
"his wisdom and faithfulness and goodness, to sup-
"pose that he has given any direction and command
"to sinners in order to their salvation, which they
"may punctually observe and do, and yet miss of
"salvation." Therefore he concludes that no endeavours of the unregenerate are commanded or directed to.

Ans. There are many directions given to men, and various duties prescribed as means some way conducive to their conversion or salvation. If men are ever so exact and punctual in observing some directions, and attending to some means directed to by Christ, but utterly negligent of others; is it any dishonour to his wisdom goodness and faithfulness, if they miss of salvation? Hearing the gospel is one of the means of salvation, but not the only one; we must also believe, and obey it. Studying the word of God is the means of attaining to all that know-
ledge

ledge which is necessary to our glorifying God: But it is not a single transient act of attention hereto that will be sufficient to furnish us for every good work. A course of diligent application to the means of instruction is necessary for this purpose. That labour and striving enjoined on men by Christ may be taken two ways, 1. In the *compound sense*, as including all those endeavours which are required in order to the end proposed, whether previous or consequent to regeneration. Now it is not to be thought that any one who thus labours and strives, that is, who punctually observes all the directions Christ has given in order to salvation will miss of it. 2. This labour and striving may be taken in the *divided sense*, signifying any particular endeavour, or act of attendance to any one of the means of grace and salvation. Now though each particular endeavour in the use of means is in itself a compliance with our Savior's direction, which prescribes a diligent attendance to *all*, and *each* of the means subservient to the end proposed; which includes at the same time *each* transient act, and a constant persevering *course* or *series* of acts; yet there is no difficulty at all in supposing, that men may in some particular instances comply with our Savior's direction, and yet neglecting some of the necessary means of salvation may miss of it.

But it may be asked, if a man labours and strives as well as he can while unregenerate, must we not necessarily conclude from the goodness and faithfulness of Christ that he will certainly attain to a saving conversion? I answer. 1. This does not necessarily follow. I do not know that there is any promise in the gospel of regenerating and converting grace to the endeavours of the unregenerate. God may oblige us to wait upon him for his blessing, in the diligent use of appointed means, and let us know that we have en-

couragement to hope for a blessing in this way, and no other ; and yet reserve to himself a sovereign liberty of granting or withholding his blessing. This he has done in other cases. He has commanded us to train up our children in the way wherein they should go, in hopes that when they are old they will not depart from it ; to use means for the preservation of life and health ; to labour working with our hands, that we may have to give to him that needeth ; and yet has given us no absolute assurance, that our endeavours shall secure to us the ends they are fitted to subserve. An unpromised blessing may be necessary to render the means effectual ; and yet it may well become the wisdom and goodness of God to command and encourage us to use the means. Surely Mr. H. will not say that it is dishonourable to the faithfulness of God to grant unpromised favours, by blessing means ordinarily, though not always successful. Nor can I think he will, on second thought, find any thing more unworthy of the divine perfections, in requiring us to use such means, in order to obtain such unpromised favours. 2. I do not think there ever was a sinner that attended the means of conversion as well as he was able while unregenerate. It seems then to be a matter of meer speculation, how we resolve a case, which we have no reason to think ever was, or will be found among the children of men. If it should be supposed, that those who strive in all respects as well as they can while unregenerate, shall assuredly obtain converting grace ; yet I think all that are the subjects of this grace must own, that it was to them a sovereign unpromised favour. But 3. If it did indeed follow from our doctrine (as it does not) that there is a sure connection between sinners attending God's appointed means according to their best ability, and their obtaining converting grace ; this would be no confutation

tation of it. For we have much clearer and surer evidence that unregenerate sinners are commanded to attend the means of grace, than we have that their best endeavours may fail of issuing in their conversion. Our doctrine will therefore sooner prove this consequence to be true, than this consequence will prove our doctrine to be false. Our doctrine is supported by direct and positive evidence : But all that can be said against an inseperable connection between sinners attending the means of grace according to their present capacity, and obtaining special and saving grace, is, that it wants proof. Mr. H. has indeed attempted a direct and positive proof, that there are no promises of special grace to the doings of the unregenerate. But his arguments only prove that there are no promises of salvation to such doings ; which is quite a different point. This may be denied, quite consistently with the supposition of a sure connection between a sinner's attending the means of conversion, and obtaining converting grace. It is thought an easy task to shew the insufficiency of his arguments to his proposed design ; and that he undertook needlessly an *onus probandi* to which he was unequal. Be this as it may, the issue of the present debate, and the force of the argument we have been insisting on, is not affected by any thing he has said.

Having thus answered to our author's objections, it may here be proper to offer some remarks on what he has said in confutation of a maxim, which he says many hold to, and build much upon ; namely, " that
" whatever is said to the unregenerate in scripture by
" way of exhortation and command, can require and
" propose nothing but what they may do, and yet
" continue unregenerate." P. 133. I know of none who hold to this doctrine ; there may however be many for any thing I know. If there are, I wish he
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had argued more to the purpose in confutation of i
than the most of what he has said appears to be. B
indeed I cannot help suspecting that he has mistoo
the meaning of those he disputes against. If he ha
it is not the only mistake of this kind that he has mad
I will therefore endeavour to state the matter plainl
as I understand it, and then consider his arguments.

The requirements of God's commands may be con
sidered in a twofold view, viz. as *duties*, or debts o
obedience simply; and as *means*, designed and fitte
to subserve the purposes of divine wisdom and good
ness. Divine commands, considered as mere decla
rations of duty, oblige all mankind to perfect obedi
ence; and also to every supposable degree of hol
obedience, however short of perfection; and also to
each part of the duty in the compound sense; how
ever such part taken by itself may not contain what
ever is implied in an act of perfect, or sincere evan
gelical obedience. In this view the law, and each
command is to be preached and inculcated on all, in
it's full length and breadth, as *duty*. Thus the pre
cepts of the gospel requiring repentance, faith, new
obedience, external reformation, attending on means
are to be urged as the present duty, of all to whom
the gospel is preached. And though it is certain that
no man in this world will or can comply with these
precepts, with that perfection of obedience in all re
spects which is his duty, yet they who have a princi
ple of true holiness may, by the assistance of special
grace, have a sincere respect to all God's commands;
and this is their duty. And though the unregenerate
have not a next power to yield sincere evangelical o
bedience to all or any of God's commands, yet they
can, by God's common assistance, do many things re
quired, as to the substance and matter, and this is
their duty. But their not doing these things in a ho-
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ly manner is their sin; and a regenerate person's not doing his duty in a perfect manner is his sin; for which both are equally inexcusable.

But if we consider duties *as means* appointed by God to subserve the purposes of his goodness to the children of men; then we say, 1. That perfect conformity to the rule of our duty not being an appointed means of salvation is not, as such, prescribed to any: That exercises of true faith not being appointed means to unbelievers of obtaining a saving knowledge of, and faith in Christ, are not, as means to this end, prescribed to any unbeliever: That the exercises of a holy principle not being the appointed means of preparing the soul for the infusion of a principle of holiness are not, as such, prescribed to any unregenerate sinner. 2. God has not enjoined on any the impracticable task of exercising supernatural powers or principles before they are furnished with them, as the means of obtaining any blessings temporal or spiritual. To prescribe impossible means would be the same thing as to prescribe none. Faith and repentance are means of salvation only to those who are enabled to believe and repent. And commands to believe and repent, in order to salvation, do not require men to do these duties by the powers of nature, but by the assistance of special grace. Such commands are designed, as moral inducements to excite and draw forth into act the principle or power for such exercises, communicated to the soul by the holy Spirit. Yet, 3. The hearers of the gospel are to be immediately called to believe and repent; and these commands and exhortations are to be enforced with a promise of pardon and salvation if they comply with them, and a threatening of damnation if they remain impenitent and unbelievers. For this is the immediate duty of all, whether regenerate or not. And
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the inculcation of it, by the blessing of God, is a means of good both to saints and sinners. The former are hereby stirred up to renewed exercises of faith and repentance. And in the latter the work of conviction and humiliation may, through the influence of the holy Spirit, be promoted. Hereby they are led into a just view of the misery and danger of a state of sin; and are excited earnestly to implore the mercy of God, whose grace alone can renew and sanctify their natures, and work in them that faith and repentance without which they cannot be saved; and diligently to attend on all the appointed means of conversion. Besides, there is reason to hope, that the effectual influences of the holy Spirit will accompany these exhortations to some, enabling and persuading them to a saving compliance. And finally the exhortations to believe and repent imply, by necessary consequence, an obligation to something which men have a power for while unregenerate: That is, a serious attendance to the means of grace; as shall hereafter be shewn. But 4. Some things are prescribed in scripture, as means conducive to the spiritual and temporal good of men, which they have a next power to comply with while unregenerate; as has been shewn. These things are not only the immediate duty, but the next means, to which the hearers of the gospel are called to attend without delay, according to their present ability, whether they are regenerate or not. The performance of these duties, as to the substance, is in the power of men, by God's common assistance; and this is *absolutely* prescribed, as means tending to their spiritual good. The performance of these things in a holy manner, is prescribed as next means of obtaining spiritual blessings *conditionally*; that is, if they are furnished with a principle or power enabling them to such a manner of performance. But a holy manner
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of performance, though it be the *present duty* of all the hearers of the gospel, and though it be the necessary means of salvation to all, yet it is not absolutely prescribed, as the *next means* of obtaining spiritual blessings, to men while unregenerate. For, as was said, acts of holiness, as means of salvation, are prescribed to men to be done not by the powers of nature, but by the assistance of special grace. When therefore the unregenerate are in scripture called to an immediate attendance to such means as they have a next power to attend on, by God's common assistance ; the absolute and primary intendment of such exhortations is, that they should do it seriously and diligently, according to their present capacity. I add 5. That God's denying special and effectual grace to those who are favoured with the outward means, is a penal consequence of their neglecting to do what they had a next power to do in a way of attendance on means ; and this neglect is accordingly to be considered as the principal cause and occasion of their eternal ruin. And consequently, though free grace is the original cause of mens salvation, yet not unregeneracy simply considered, nor the denial of special grace, but free will abused is the original proper cause of their perdition. *

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* " These things are required of us in order to regeneration, and
 " it is in the power of our own wills to comply with them :
 " And we may observe concerning them, that the omission of
 " them, the neglect of men in them, is the principal occasion
 " and cause of the eternal ruin of the souls of the generality of
 " them to whom, or amongst whom the gospel is preached.
 " This is the condemnation that light is come into the world,
 " but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds
 " are evil. Joh. 3. 19. The generality of men know full
 " well that they do in this matter no more what they are
 " able, than what they should. All pleadable pretences of in-
 " ability and weakness are far from them. They cannot but
 " know

These observations, it is hoped, may help Mr. H. to understand the principles on which our argument proceeds better than he appears to have done; that if he should not think fit to admit them, he may at least be able to oppose them more pertinently.

Let

"know here, and shall be forced to confess hereafter, that it was
 "merely from their own cursed sloth, with love of the world
 "and sin, that they were diverted from a diligent attendance
 "on the means of conversion, and the sedulous exercise of their
 "minds about them" Owen on the Spirit p. 193.

"It is true man hath not a power to believe and repent: But yet
 "withal I say he hath a power to do those things upon the ne-
 "glect of which God denies him ability to believe and repent."

Dr. Preston's, 9th sermon on Rom. i. 19, 20.

"God is justified in the denial of his special grace to those who
 "do not make a due use of his common gifts and graces.

"And indeed here will lie mens damnation, because they do
 "not make a just use of that common grace which they have,
 "and might make a better use of than they do. If they would
 "be faithful in that, God would not deny them the true
 "riches." Collins's Continuation of Pool's Annot. on Luk.
 16. 11.

"It doth not appear that God doth condemn any man simply for
 "not being regenerate, but for not using the means appointed
 "to such an end, for not avoiding those sins which hindred his
 "regeneration, and which might have been avoided by him if
 "he would, though indeed every unregenerate man will be
 "condemned. Our Savior in the last judgment doth not
 "charge men with their unregeneracy, but with their omissions
 "of what they might have done, and that easily; and com-
 "missions which they might have avoided, Mat. 25. 41."

Charnock's Works, Vol. 2. p. 106.

"The cause of mens final and everlasting ruin may be referred,
 "in one view of it, to God's withholding those gracious influ-
 "ences, which if they had been imparted would indeed have
 "subdued the greatest perverseness. But his withholding these
 "is not merely an arbitrary act, but a just punishment of mens
 "wickedness, and of their obstinate folly, in trifling with the
 "means of grace, and grieving his spirit until it was provoked
 "to withdraw." Doddridge on Regeneration, Sermon 7.

To the same purpose speak the ancient Fathers, viz. Irenæus,
Clement, Chrysostom, Augustin, Prosper, &c.

Let us now attend to his reasoning. Says he, 1. "If this maxim be true, then another is as true, viz. that it is not the duty of the unregenerate to repent and believe the gospel." P. 133. Answ. It is granted that the maxim as he has stated it is not true; and his inference from it is just, if such a repentance and belief of the gospel be intended as flows from a holy principle. But though repentance, and faith, and perfect obedience to the law be the present duty of the unregenerate, it will not follow that any of these things are the next means necessary for them to use, in order to obtain spiritual blessings; or that they are in this view prescribed to them considered as unregenerate. For, as was said, though the end for which the gospel directs men to the use of means may be their present duty, yet we are not to suppose absurdly, that it is therefore prescribed as the means of itself. Our author's argument if designed to confute any maxim that we "hold to or build upon" aims *toto cælo* wide of the mark; and so I leave it. If he will prove that faith and repentance are not only the present duty of the unregenerate, but the prescribed means for obtaining faith and repentance at first, and of preparing the soul for the grace of regeneration, we will consider it.

2. "It also follows, that sinners are not to be exhorted or commanded to do any thing from higher and better views dispositions and principles than they have." *Ibid.* Answ. This does not follow, either from our principle, or from the maxim, as he calls it, which himself has mentioned. We say that such endeavours as men have a present power for are prescribed, and to be exhorted to as means; but we do not say that such endeavours are all that is to be inculcated as duty. Besides, how can it be proved to be a just consequence, that if men are to be ex-

horted to act from such *principles* and *powers* as they are furnished with, then they must be exhorted to act from no higher *views* than they have at present ? It is the proper use of exhortations to lead men into different views from what they are supposed to have, not to create new principles and powers of action. True christians have a principle of grace, and are to be exhorted to act from it : But they sometimes have unworthy views and dispositions, from which they are not to be exhorted to act. And would any one of good understanding, except Mr. H. imagine that exhortations calling men to act from such principles and powers as they have and are capable of exercising, imply that they must act from such views and dispositions as at present actually take place ? The unregenerate and regenerate are endowed with such principles, as render them capable of acting from higher and better views than they often have : And it is the design of exhortations or moral suasion to work on these principles, and put them in exercise. But it is added, “ The only reason why impenitent enemies to God “ may not be exhorted to repent and love God, if “ there be any reason for this, is, that this requires “ higher principles than those which they now act “ from. And for the same reason no person may be “ exhorted and commanded to do any thing which “ his heart is now set against.” Answ. We grant that sinners are commanded to repent, and love God with all their hearts, and in one word to be perfect ; and this is to be inculcated as duty. Yet though this is no more than their duty, there is a good reason why all this is not to be pressed on them as the necessary means of salvation ; for God has not prescribed sinless perfection, as the means or way of salvation. We grant that faith and repentance are to be inculcated on all the hearers of the gospel, not only as duty, but

but as necessary means of salvation. Yet there is a good reason, why a holy attendance on the means is not prescribed to sinners, as necessary in order to a saving conversion; viz. because this would make the end it's own means. Nevertheless men may, in order to conversion, be properly exhorted to act from other views, than they have at present; and to do those things which their hearts may now be set against: And such exhortations may prevail with them, by working on such principles as they are at present endowed with. And if it be necessary that a man's present views be changed, in order to his attending on means to any advantage, it is highly proper that this be exhorted to. Nor is this prescribing the end as means of itself.

When Peter exhorted Simon to pray to God; if he exhorted to this as a means of obtaining converting grace, he did not absurdly direct him to exercise this grace in prayer, in order to obtain it; though he might properly exhort him to pray from "higher views and motives than merely worldly ones." And when Christ exhorted the Jews to labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life; he directed to all those endeavours which are ordinarily necessary, either by immediate or remote connection with the end here propounded. And since some endeavours are ordinarily necessary previous to regeneration, it is with good reason concluded, that such endeavours are here exhorted to though far short of their whole duty. But it does not follow from this conclusion that they were not directed to act for this end with higher views and aims than purely to get their fill of bread, (though this consequence has been drawn "*by one who would be loth to have his talent at clear reasoning called in question,*" to return him once more his own compliment) unless it be proved that so long as they were unregenerate they

they were mere animals incapable of acting with higher views than to fill their bellies. Besides, let Mr. H. if he can, shew that it is unsuitable to divine wisdom, to allure men to an attendance on the means of instruction, even with the hopes of temporal enjoyments. The Sinai covenant, would, I suspect, prove a troublesome objection against all arguments *a priori*, or from antecedent fitness, which he, or any one else could offer to that purpose. But he goes on,

3. "Yea it hence follows, that men are not to be exhorted to do any thing contrary to their prevailing inclination."

Answ. This seems to be only a repetition of his last consequence in other words. And the same answer may be returned. It is one thing to inculcate acts of religious obedience, simply as duty; and another to inculcate such acts, as means of obtaining spiritual blessings. To exhort men to act according to their present power, is a different thing from exhorting them to act according to their present inclination. The consequence must therefore be denied. Our author however attempts to prove it. Says he, "if men's prevailing inclination in one case is a good reason why they may not be exhorted and commanded to do that which is contrary to it, it is as good a reason in any other case of this kind whatsoever." That men are commanded to do that for which they have neither a present inclination, nor a present power to incline, through the mere influence of moral suasion, we have often granted. Though if any should deny that men are commanded to do any thing for which they want a principle or secondary power, our author must argue more to the purpose, than he does in this place, if he means to confute them. Is the next power of inclining or willing upon the proposal of moral inducements, the same

same thing with the act of inclination or willingness, which by means of motives is deduced from it? In other words, is the subjective ground of action, the action itself? Is the cause and the effect the same thing? The author "seems to take this for granted, and build much upon it as an undoubted maxim. And he is not alone in it. Other preachers and writers have represented the matter in this light," who (whether they are guilty of "*ransacking the scriptures*" or not) would have been capable of "*distinguishing*" and reasoning "*to better purpose*," had they not been deceived, by not duly attending to the difference of the ideas confounded together under the name of *moral inability*. Whether an "express vindication of this notion will be undertaken," time will shew.

The proposal and vindication of the preceding arguments has run out to such a length, that I will mention but one more, and that very briefly.

IX. The hearers of the gospel are commanded to repent and be converted that they may be saved; and this infers an obligation on all to attend the means of conversion. Such commands implicitly require whatever is necessary to be done by us, in order to a compliance with them. Now some endeavours of men while unregenerate are ordinarily necessary to their first conversion. An active attendance to the divine word is the means of faith and repentance; and as such is virtually enjoined in the command to believe and repent: * But an attendance to the means of our first conversion is in nature prior to conversion. If

* "If men are under any obligation to attend to the command to
 "repent and be converted, or to obey this command, they are
 "under obligation to all that which is implied in this, or necessary on their parts in order to it; therefore are under obligation to hear and attend to the truths contained in God's
 "word with the utmost concern and diligence." Hopkins on the

If it be said, that men are commanded to attend the means of conversion, provided they do it with an honest, that is, a new regenerate heart; and it is in such a way of attending means that faith is obtained: I answer, 1. In order to conversion it is necessary that men attend means previous to regeneration; that those preparatory dispositions may thereby be wrought in the soul, without which the author says, it would not be a wise act in God to regenerate a sinner. Such an attendance on means is then necessary on our part as does not imply a new heart; and of consequence this is virtually enjoined in the command to repent. This is, if not the next, yet the remoter means of conversion. Though a man while unconverted does not comply with the command requiring conversion; yet if he diligently attends on God's appointed means, he therein does something implicitly required in that command, and which is therefore his duty. 2. Suppose a man has a new heart, or a power for holy acts created in him; yet until he is a believer he is not united to Christ, or accepted in him. If then a regenerate unbeliever is called to the use of means in order to obtain faith, and is encouraged to do so with a promise that he shall in this way obtain a saving knowledge of, and so an interest in Christ the mediator; (which is Mr. H's opinion if I understand him) * then methinks we have found a conditional promise of that grace whereby we are first united to Christ; the condition of which promise is complied with previous to our acceptance of and union to him; and so a blessing inseparably connected with salvation is promised

the means of grace. p. 138. The reading of this with other passages of the same tenor in the tract here quoted, brought to mind Augustine's remark on Tertullian. "*Quoniam est acutus, interdum contra opinionem suam visa veritate superatur.*"

* p. 128. Serm. on Regen. p. 44.

mised to us, not as being in Christ, but as acting with a good and honest heart, and it would seem (according to his reasoning) out of respect purely to the goodness and honesty of our exercises, and so I fear this notion will prove as subversive of the gospel, as promises to unregenerate endeavours. For until we are united to Christ, our honest hearts with their exercises are only an inherent qualification, which does not denote that special relation to the mediator which gives us an interest in the blessings of the covenant.

I find nothing urged by Mr. H. tending to enervate our argument, but what has been already answered. He says, the word of God always requires us to be ready to receive the truth in love ; if we do this we shall not attend on means as do the unregenerate. True. This is always our duty. Hence he concludes that " Sinners are not required to attend on means in any one instance as such, or with an impenitent unbelieving heart." P. 139. To this we answer, as before, that unregeneracy and an impenitent unbelieving heart, are not required as adjuncts or qualifications of mens attendance on means ; but the attendance itself is absolutely required of men, though unregenerate and impenitent ; and has, by the appointment and blessing of God, a subserviency to their saving conversion, [as well as to other desirable purposes. Nor is it any objection, that such an attendance comes far short of the duty required of men in the word of God. A perfect compliance with our duty in any instance is not an appointed means of salvation. Mr. H. says truly, " As God does not make the depraved will of sinners the rule of their duty, so he does not make the rule of their duty the rule of his conduct in giving or not giving a new heart ;" I add, neither does he make the rule of their duty the rule of his will and wisdom, in prescribing to us the means of

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obtaining temporal and spiritual blessings. He goes on to ask, "Why did the apostles direct men immediately to repent, and be converted, and believe on Jesus Christ?" I answer again, 1. Because it was their duty. 2. It was the necessary means of salvation. 3. Such calls are *vehicula gratiæ*, in and with which God is wont to convey his special grace to some, enabling and persuading them to an immediate compliance. And 4. That a diligent waiting on God in the use of appointed means for further light and grace might be promoted in all, according to their present ability. It may be the next duty of sinners to believe and repent, and yet a further attendance on the means of grace, with further degrees of light and conviction in consequence of such attendance, may be necessary for them, before they can savingly believe and repent; in which case this is to be exhorted to as the next means of salvation. *

To close our plea I might mention the intolerable consequences which appear to me to be inseparable from the denial of the important truth hitherto defended; but as I have somewhere hinted a little, at some of them; as it might look too much like uncharitableness to dwell on these things, and might seem to imply a charge against Mr. H. and some other worthy men, as if they allowed or held to such principles as, I believe, they heartily detest; and as this would lengthen an essay already grown to an undesirable bulk; I shall therefore wave this, with some other things which I thought at first to have added; and prepare

* "Persons that are not humbled are called to come to Christ. Their next work indeed is not to come to Christ, but to come out of themselves and so come to Christ; to forsake all other confidences, and so build on Christ; to throw away all other hopes, and flee to this hope that is set before them." Stoddard's safety of appearing, &c. p. 254. See also Norton's Orthodox Evangelist, p. 130, 193, &c.

pare to stand on the defensive, against what is pleaded on the other side of the question. Which will accordingly be attended to in the next section.

S E C T. IV. A Reply to Mr. Hopkins's Arguments.

MR. H's first and principal argument, founded on our Savior's discourse with the scribe, concerning the first and great commandment, has been already represented and answered to. But as he has, in order to illustrate and confirm his reasoning, added some things, the examination of which did not then so properly fall in our way ; I will here in the first place briefly attend to them.

He quotes that text in Isai. 1. 12. as a clear confirmation of his argument and doctrine. " When ye
" come to appear before me, who hath required these
" things at your hands ?" On which he thus glosses.
" These things were required, but not for their own
" sake, but only as an expression of their respect and
" love to God. Therefore when this ceased to be
" exercised and expressed, and they appeared not to
" have the love of God, but the contrary, their at-
" tendance on these externals was not doing any thing
" that was required of them. These things were not
" required of them as they performed them. There-
" fore in their attendance on them they really did no-
" thing that was required of them, and so did not
" the least part of their duty." P. 119.

Ans. We have no reason to think that their attendance on the externals of religious worship is here called an abomination, and what was not required of them, merely or principally because they were unrege-

nerate. For at other times, when the Israelites attended on the ordinances of divine worship, there is no hint that what they did was not required of them, but on the contrary, it is repeatedly said that "they did according to the commandment of the Lord," though they acted not from a principle of true holiness. Some testimonies to this purpose I have had occasion to mention, concerning that rebellious generation, whose carcases fell in the wilderness; who not only were, but appeared to be destitute of true love to God, by their daily perverseness and murmuring against him, for which they were rebuked, threatened and punished from time to time. Yet there is not one word intimating in the least that it was not required of them, ungodly as they were, to keep the passover, and sabbath, and offer the sacrifices prescribed in their law: But on the contrary, in doing these things they are said to have done according to the commandment of the Lord.* If these things were required of the unregenerate Israelites, however destitute of love to God, in the time of Moses, we may be sure that it was not their unregeneracy, or want of holy love, simply considered, that was the reason why they were in the time of Isaiah challenged in this manner, "who hath required these things at your hands?"

And here I must refresh our author's memory, which seems a little to have failed him. We have lately heard him pleading, that "God in his conduct toward the people of Israel, and in what he says of them, acted not as the searcher of hearts; but has respect only to their external appearance and conduct." If so, it was not the want of inward holiness that was the cause why their religious performances are declared to be an abomination, and not required at their hands; but it was the irregularity of their outward

* Exod. 12. 28. Numb. 9. 5. 8. 20, &c.

outward behaviour. The prophet appears evidently, in this passage, to reprove them for their transgressions of the Sinai covenant ; the condition of which was external obedience, and it's sanction, temporal blessings and judgments. The sins with which he charges them are outward acts of disobedience : And the motives with which he persuades them to repentance are the promises and threatnings of the Sinai law. " If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land : But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." Ver. 19, 20.

The persons here addressed were grossly immoral in their lives ; and yet affected to appear zealous in their attendance on religious ordinances ; thinking, it seems, as did the pharisees afterward, hereby to cloke their neglect of the weightier matters of the law. For this end they overcharged God's altars, with their free will offerings ; which though allowed and accepted when offered in a right manner, yet were not absolutely required by any divine precept. There was not such a *multitude* of sacrifices absolutely required, as the expression here naturally imports. They observed the sacred festivals, it is probable, with a solemn parade ; and yet in an irregular manner, not according to the rules prescribed to them. They might then be very justly reprimanded with " who hath required these things at your hands, to tread my courts in this manner, and on such an errand, when your hands are full of blood, oppression, and all kinds of unrighteousness ?" This text is therefore far from proving any thing to our author's purpose. His observations from it have been before considered.

Another text quoted by him is Jer. 22. 23. " I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices :

" But

“But this thing commanded I them, saying, obey
 “my voice.” From which he argues in the same
 manner as above. Expositors agree that the negative
 expression is meant comparatively. The sense is, To
 obey is better than sacrifice.

He goes on, “None will suppose, I presume, that
 “the devils did any duty, when they cried out, Thou
 “art the Christ the Son of God. Or when the chief
 “devil in the possessed man prayed to Christ in the
 “name of the rest, in the most earnest manner, I be-
 “seech thee torment me not. And will any one im-
 “agine that the——unregenerate do any more duty
 “in their external words and actions, than the devils
 “did in the instances mentioned?” P. 119. “Won-
 derful argument”! If he will prove that the devil
 confessed Christ voluntarily, and not by constraint;
 that he was by revelation from God commanded so to
 do; that this was the instituted means of obtaining a
 blessing; that God encouraged him to hope for
 mercy in this way; that he confessed Christ, and
 prayed to him from a conviction of conscience that
 it was his duty; then this matter will be further con-
 sidered.

Our author proceeds to discourse of self-love, and
 natural conscience, endeavouring to shew that they
 are no principles of obedience. The substance of
 what he has said, has been examined in the second
 section. They are principles, whereby men are di-
 rected and prompted to do such kind of actions, as
 have been proved to be enjoined on them; so are
 their duty. But he objects, “there is no love to
 God and our neighbour, while men act only from
 natural principles.” Answ. Not to insist that there
 is some kind of good will to others, natural to man-
 kind; we say, that something besides love is requi-
 red, and something which may be done from other
 principles

principles than holy love ; as has been proved. He pleads further, " there is no obedience in acting merely from natural principles." Answ. It is not pretended that all acts which flow from self-love and natural conscience, are acts of obedience to God. But the doing of such actions as men are commanded to do, though from natural principles, is obedience ; unless the scriptures miscall it. Though an erroneous conscience is not a principle of obedience, in those things wherein it errs ; yet when it's dictates are according to truth, prescribing what is really matter of duty, (which we have proved is the case, when it represents to the unregenerate their obligation to do what is enjoined on them, according to their present ability) then it may be a principle directing and disposing them to do what is their duty. It is added, " If the dictates of conscience are according to truth, they declare that love to God and our neighbour is all that is required." Answ. Prove it, and answer our reasons to the contrary, otherwise you beg in vain. It is further pleaded, " there is but one principle of obedience, which is love to God and our neighbour." This also we deny, 1. Because we have proved that there are other principles of obedience. 2. Because love, being itself an act of obedience, (Mr. H. says it is the whole of obedience) must therefore flow from some principle prior to, and diverse from itself. I add that love alone is not an adequate principle of obedience, in those actions which may be supposed to flow from it. It's operations must be guided by faith, and a right conscience, otherwise they will be irregular ; however good the principle of love is in itself. As to what is said of self-love, I have elsewhere considered that point. I will not return those exclamations of absurdity, which our author so profusely pours forth at all differing from him

him on these points ; but only query in his own words on another occasion, " are we the only persons that are confused and bewildered ? "

His second argument is as follows : " All God's commands to his creatures are an expression of his will and heart, which is the same with their being a transcript of his moral perfections, as the common phrase is. But God's moral perfection is his holiness ; And his will is holy. Therefore whatever command is an expression of his will, must require holiness. That which requires any thing else, is no expression of his moral perfections ; therefore cannot be the expression of the will of God, and so cannot be his command." P. 122.

Ans. The holiness of God may be expressed in those commands, which require the doing of that which is not in itself holiness ; if what is commanded be not sin, but good in it's kind ; and if the end for which it is commanded be agreeable to his wisdom and holiness. All the works of God are expressions of his will and holy perfections ; yet he is the proper cause of other effects besides holiness. There is an actual concurrence and co-operation of divine providence with men, even in their sinful actions ; though he be not the author, or positive cause of their sinfulness. And this providential concurrence is an expression of his holiness ; yet the effect is not a holy action in the creature. His moral perfections are manifested, in his so constituting the connection of things with each other, that those means which have nothing of true holiness in them should conduce to the happiness of those who use them ; and in letting men know it, that they might have encouragement, or a reasonable inducement to be in the use of such means ; and in prescribing an attendance to them by his sovereign authority, on pain of incurring the effects of his high displeasure,

displeasure, as a motive to such attendance. Indeed if such actions were prescribed, the doing of which is sin ; or if any real encouragement were held forth to men, either in God's word, or in the constituted connection of means and ends, that they might have a reasonable inducement to *such actions*, (as our author maintains) we could not reconcile this with the divine holiness. But far be such imaginations. God's prescribing to the Israelites the keeping of the passover, in order to their preservation from death by the destroying angel ; was it not an expression of his moral perfections ? And yet the prescribed means for this end was the outward act of killing a lamb, sprinkling the blood, &c. which the unregenerate performed. All the commands, counsels, or advices of a good man, ought to be expressions of his holiness ; yet Paul, and even our Savior commanded, or advised to the doing of that, which did not imply any holy exercise, as has been noted. And, unless I am misinformed, our author and others like minded will not scruple to advise to an attendance on the means of grace, upon the supposition of a state of unregeneracy ; though they own that they have no instruction from the scriptures for so doing. I will suppose that such advices are thought by them to be expressions of benevolence and holiness ; not of sin, and enmity to being in general ; notwithstanding the actions advised to are not holy exercises. Why must it then be thought inconsistent with the holiness of God to enjoin such actions ? Moreover the perfect holiness of God is expressed in the constitution of the new covenant, with the means or conditions of salvation therein required ; yet not perfect, but sincere acts of holiness, are, according to the new covenant, the prescribed way of our walking with God, and obtaining eternal life. On the whole, the principle on which this argument of Mr. H. depends,

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pend, viz. *That a command requiring any thing short of our whole duty, can be no expression of the holiness of God*, being intirely destitute of proof; a bare denial of it had been sufficient, according to the laws of disputation. And yet I have, beyond what is incumbent on a respondent, offered such evidences of the falshood of this principle, as are perhaps a sufficient confutation. So I pass to his

Third argument, which stands thus: "Duty to God always supposes something given to God, and done for him, out of regard and respect to him. But where there is no true love to God there is no true respect paid to him; nothing is offered to him or done for him in the intention and design of the doer. Therefore there is really no duty done. Nothing that is due to God is given; and so no command that he can give is obeyed." P 122.

Answ. Duty may be taken either in the compound, or in the divided sense. In the former sense it essentially includes a holy respect to the will and authority of God, with every other circumstance implied in an act of true holiness. In the latter sense, each particular part of the *compound duty* is in itself matter of duty. For whatever is contained in, and enjoined by the divine command, is duty: But actions externally good are enjoined in the divine command *in themselves*, as well as a holy respect to God in the performance. If a man has no respect to God in doing an action good in itself, he is guilty of sin in the manner of the performance; but the performance is not, for the substance, contrary to the divine command. On the other hand, if through culpable ignorance, or an erroneous conscience, he neglects to do an external duty commanded by God; for instance, if he should neglect to pray, or give alms, when he ought to do it, thinking that it was his duty to forbear these things, until

until he had clear and sure evidences of his regeneration ; he would undoubtedly be guilty of a sin of omission, however he might be supposed to have a sincere respect to God, and to what he apprehends is his will, in such forbearance of his duty. But if a man should *neglect* to do external duties, regardless of the command of God ; such a one would violate a double obligation, and incur a double guilt. Disregard of the authority of God is in itself sin : And the omission of an external duty, as to the substance, is in itself sin. Consequently the performance is in itself required, so is duty. For it cannot be in itself sin to omit that, the doing of which is not in itself duty. The commands of God enjoin duties both in the compound, and in the divided sense : They enjoin the whole conjunctly, and each part severally and by itself ; as has been already shewn. Our author's definition of duty being fallacious, his argument founded on the fallacy must fall.

Something however seems to be aimed at, which will require further consideration. And therefore (craving pardon for taking the liberty) I will endeavour to mend the argument a little by putting the word obedience instead of duty, as being of a less general signification. Obedience does indeed imply a respect to the will and command of another ; though duty in the *divided sense*, does not necessarily imply such a respect. An act of religious obedience involves in it's substance not only the performance of an action which is in itself the matter of duty, but also a regard to the command of God, as a reason and motive to the performance. If it should then be said, that allowing unregenerate sinners may perform actions materially good, which may be termed the matter of duty ; yet since they have no true respect to God or his commands in any of their performances, there is nothing

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of

of obedience in what they do, however good and useful in itself. I answer,

1. Supposing there is nothing of religious obedience in their doings, yet they ought to do actions materially good ; and if they do so they will not incur that guilt which inseparably attends the neglect of them in itself, or for it's own sake. There is an obligation to do the action, as well as to have a respect to the command of God in doing it, as has been observed. If we should suppose the unregenerate to be perfect atheists, yet we may truly say that they ought to be just and kind in their behaviour towards mankind. And in this case, though there would be nothing of religious obedience in any of their actions, yet they could not be charged with the sin of omitting those acts of justice and kindness, which they would otherwise be guilty of, besides their atheistical disregard of God. But,

2. There are two kinds of obedience to the commands of God spoken of in scripture, and a twofold respect to him. A conviction of the greatness and majesty of God, his power and right to punish his rebellious creatures, the righteousness of his commands, and the obligation and fitness of a creature's being subject to the will of it's creator and supreme ruler, has a tendency to put men upon some endeavours of obedience to his commands, from the natural principles of self-love and the moral sense, however destitute of a principle of true holiness. Such endeavours of obedience are good in their kind, as well as the principles and motives prompting thereto ; and they are commanded by God, on supposition of a state of unregeneracy, as has been proved. And they who neglect diligent endeavours to do what God has commanded, according to their present ability, though unregenerate, will find that their wilfully refusing to do what they had a next power to do, in a way of religious

gious obedience, will terribly add to the guilt they are chargeable with, for not doing such duties as at present they are incapable of, for want of a principle of holiness. There is another kind of obedience attended with, and flowing from a divine and supernatural principle, with a spiritual discernment of spiritual things. This is peculiar to the regenerate, who have a holy respect to God and his will. If then Mr. H. means to assert, that a holy respect to God is implied in whatever is duty, or obedience of any kind ; he does but humbly beg the question. If he means, that the unregenerate have no kind of regard to God or his command, this we are warranted to deny, both from scripture and experience ; nor do I find one word offered in confirmation of it.

His fourth argument is, " If God should command
" the unregenerate to do any thing, as such, and
" which they may do consistently with their having
" no love to him, and being under the power of per-
" fect and reigning enmity against him ; this is, in
" some degree, if not wholly giving up his demands
" on them which require them to love him, to repent,
" and embrace the gospel." P. 122, 123.

Ans. We deny the consequence. If indeed nothing was required of men, *as duty*, but what they were able to do from natural principles while unregenerate ; this would imply that the demands of the law were, in some degree, given up. But this supposition we reject. Will Mr. H. say, that God has given up the demands of his law, in prescribing to men, endeavours which fall short of sinless perfection, as means of obtaining temporal or spiritual blessings ? Or will he say, that nothing short of sinless perfection is prescribed, as necessary, or subservient to these purposes ? Has not God, in the new covenant, required such duties and exercises, as means of salvation to be-
lievers,

lievers, which are practicable by them in this state of imperfection, through the assistance of that grace which he affords to them, notwithstanding this state of imperfection is their sin? It becomes not poor worms, to give law to their maker. We had better be more modest than to say, that if God prescribes any endeavours of ours, short of sinless perfection, as the means of obtaining needed blessings; then he must of necessity give up the demands of his law, and act dishonourably to his character and government; lest haply we be found replying against him, and blasphemously censuring the constitutions of his infinite wisdom.

God has more regard to his own honour, and the honour of his law, than we have; and he knows better what becomes his divine majesty. Yet he has required sincere though imperfect endeavours of obedience, as the way and means of making our calling and election sure, and having an entrance ministred to us abundantly into his heavenly kingdom. And in the Sinai covenant, not a perfect conformity to the whole moral law was enjoined as the necessary condition of enjoying the temporal and spiritual privileges, granted to that favoured people who were subject to it. For in this covenant provision was made for the imperfection of their obedience. Yea further, the condition of this covenant did not necessarily imply any exercises of true holiness. An external observance of God's laws and ordinances secured the divine blessing and protection to that nation.* How then can it be shewn, that the obligation of the divine law is in any measure made void, if God enjoins on the unregenerate an attendance to means, according to their present ability, in order to obtain those spiritual blessings they need? Mr. H. will never be able to prove this to eternity, unless he can overthrow the old and new testaments.

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* See Erskine's Dissertation on the Sinai Covevant.

Our author introduces the similitude of a king treating with his rebellious subjects : And argues, that if it would be dishonourable to him and his government, to require of, or propose to them, any thing lower than immediate submission, and a full return to their duty ; then much more would it be dishonourable to God, to enjoin on men any thing they can do while unregenerate. But it may easily be shewn, that a king might, without giving up his authority in the least, propose to, and require his disaffected subjects to do something, much short of a full return to their duty. And whatever the honour and support of human laws and government may require, a way has been found (blessed be God) wherein the honour of the divine law and government is maintained and magnified, without his making perfect obedience for the future the necessary means, and indispensable condition of our obtaining mercy. It can no more be concluded that his demand of holy obedience is given up, because he has prescribed to men an attendance to the means of grace while unregenerate ; than it can be concluded that his demand of perfect obedience is given up, because he has enjoined on believers a sincere respect to his commands, according to the measures of grace they have received ; though they are unable in this life perfectly to keep any of his commandments. *

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* The conclusion of this argument seems worthy of notice. Says he, " The only reason, I conceive, why any have run into this notion of God's appointing duties to the unregenerate, to be done by them while such, and have not rather been shocked at it, is that they look on them as in some measure at least excusable for not loving God and embracing the gospel, this being above their power, and what they *cannot* do while unregenerate, although (poor creatures !) they are quite willing and desirous to do what they *can*." P. 124. That there are some who hold to this notion, on reasons different from what is here

The fifth and last argument is now to be considered. "If God commands the unregenerate to do that which they may do while in a state of rebellion, and while they are with all their hearts opposing him, and in the exercise of perfect enmity against him," [that is, while unregenerate] "I see not why this is not

here assigned, he may now inform himself. But what is most remarkable in this sentence, (which contains more remarkable than I shall stay to point out) is the uncharitable judgment here expressed, concerning all differing from him in sentiment on this point. All comfortable apprehensions or hopes, that *some* holding to the notion he opposes, might perhaps not see or allow, that sinners were excusable on this principle for not loving God, are expressly disowned. The ONLY reason why ANY have run into this notion is, as he supposes, because they think sinners are excusable. What he thinks of their state, who look upon man's impotency to duty as any excuse, he elsewhere tells us. Says he, "Such have not the true knowledge of God's law, and have not been convinced of sin, as God's people are." That is, they are unregenerate. Sermon on Rom. 7. 7. p. 21. All then without exception who think "that God has appointed duties to the unregenerate to be performed by them while such," have not the "true knowledge of God's law, nor have been convinced of sin as God's people are," so are unconverted, *as he supposes*. I do not remember ever to have met with so hard and extensive a censure. Christians however have small reason to complain of this, in comparison with the reason they have to resent the hard speeches, which are uttered against the divine majesty, by those who say, that it is dishonourable to God to do that which, if the scriptures be true, he has in fact done. This is a sample of the spirit he shows towards all dissenting from his opinion. The lump is thoroughly fermented with the same four leaven. I note it here once for all, having never that I remember mentioned it before, and never intending to mention it again. Whether this be justifiable, himself may consider if he please, my aim is to plead for what I take to be the truth. I can say with sincerity concerning him, (though he may hereafter twit me with it, as he has done by Mr. Mills, in like case) I charitably hope that he is a true servant of Christ: Though I must add, that christians would regard him with more complacency, if his discourses favoured more of that meekness of wisdom recommended by the apostle. I may not imitate

“ not a commanding sin and rebellion, and making
 “ this their duty. It must be so, if all they do is sin
 “ and rebellion, which, I think is certain to a demon-
 “ stration ; for in the exercises of a moral agent there
 “ is, there can be no medium between holiness and
 “ sin.” P. 124.

Ans. If we carefully and distinctly consider what it is that God commands unregenerate sinners to do, in order to obtain spiritual and temporal blessings ; and then enquire wherein consists the sinfulness of their actions, or in other words, wherein they are inconformable to the divine law ; we shall be able easily to see that what God requires is not sin, but the whole sinfulness of the performance is a circumstance, or adjunct, which the depraved creature has added to an action good in itself. What God has enjoined on sinners as the means of good to them, is actions materially good ; for instance, the reformation of their lives, and an attendance on the means of grace. This surely is not sin in itself : If it was, it would be forever unlawful for a man, in any case, to reform, or use means. Actions which are in themselves essentially sinful, that is, forbidden in all possible cases, may not be done either by the unregenerate or the regenerate ; for instance, wilful lying ; this is unlawful, even supposing the liar should therein sincerely aim at the
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imitate him in his hard censures, for I fear my God. Nor can I think that it would be any damage or disadvantage to a good cause, if our zeal in contending for it were tempered with these charitable sentiments expressed by the great Dr. Owen. I doubt “ not” (says he) “ but that men may for a season not know, may “ disbelieve and deny some fundamental articles of christian re-
 “ ligion, and yet not be absolutely concluded not to hold the
 “ head by any sinew and ligament ; to have no influence of life
 “ by any other means. Was it not so with the apostles when
 “ they questioned the resurrection of Christ, and with the Co-
 “ rinthians who denied the resurrection of saints ?” On the
 Perseverance of Saints, p. 91,

glory of God ; which, through error of conscience, is a possible case. Such actions are for the substance and matter of them inconformable to the divine command. There is no need of enquiring into the character of the agent, or for what ends he acted, in order to determine that he did evil. But an attendance on the means of grace is not absolutely, and in all cases forbidden. On the contrary, it is absolutely enjoined on all the hearers of the gospel ; consequently the omission of it is sin in itself : And we may be sure, without any further enquiry, that he who neglects these means, having opportunity and capacity of attending upon them, therein is blameable. When any one sins in attending on means, it is an accidental defect ; and the fault lies not in the *action itself*, or in the *divided sense*, for that is absolutely commanded ; and the omission would be sin in itself ; but the fault lies in the wrong manner and circumstances of the performance : And this irregularity in the circumstances, constitutes the action a sin taken in the compound sense, as including it's circumstances, though in itself it be good and a commanded duty.

We say then, that God has absolutely commanded the hearers of the gospel, without distinction, to attend the means of religion : But he has not enjoined any of those irregular circumstances, or defects, with which the performances of the unregenerate are corrupted. These defects he has forbidden : Yet he has absolutely enjoined the actions themselves, in the divided sense, as matter of duty, and as means of good to men ; notwithstanding the sin men may be guilty of in the manner and circumstances of the performance ; and though it is certain, that so long as they are unregenerate, they neither will nor can perform them in a holy and spiritual manner. And if it be doubted, whether this be not the same in effect as to command
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the sinful defects, which through the agent's fault will certainly be conjoined with the commanded action, if he does it at all ; however metaphysicians may puzzle themselves and others in their endeavours to answer the knotty question, and perhaps after all their subtle reasonings resolve it wrong, I suppose a child that knows his right hand from his left would intuitively know to the contrary.

Eusebius had a little son scarce four years old, when he thought fit to send him to school with his horn-book. The child was very loth to go, having a mind to spend his time in play with idle companions. Child, says the father, I intend you shall go to school to-day. I hope you will go willingly, and learn to read as fast as you can. *No*, says the child, *I don't want to go*. What not want to learn to read ? *I do not want to learn. I had rather play at home*. I am sorry for that, my son : It is because you do not know what is good for your self. I would have you go chearfully, and try to learn like a good boy ; but whether you are willing or not, you must go ; or I shall be angry with you. The child fearing the effects of his father's displeasure, sets out with great reluctance, fretting and crying as he goes. Presently an acquaintance meets him. Where are you going, says he, in this sorrowful mood ? *I am going to school*, says the child. But why do you go to school ? *Because my father bid me, and threatned me if I would not go*. Did your father bid you to be loth to go, and to cry, and murmur as you was going ? *No : he bid me go willingly*. But *I hate to go ; and he knew it ; yet he said I must go if I did not love it, and if I did cry*. But if your father knew that you hated to go to school, and would cry if he made you go, then when he bid you go, he bid you cry as you went, didn't he ? *I tell you, father did not bid me cry as I was going ; he chid me for cry-*

ing ; but he told me that I should go though I was ever so unwilling, and cried ever so much. I ask now, would not such an answer be perfectly agreeable to the plain dictates of common sense ? Whatever close reasoners can do, I am much mistaken, if children cannot plainly see, that to command one absolutely to do an action, though it should be ever so certain that it will be done in a faulty manner if done at all, is intirely different from commanding the faulty manner, as well as the performance. Nor is this in any measure implied in that.

But says our author, " It must be so" (that is to command men to do any thing while unregenerate must be commanding sin) " if all they do is sin, which " is I think certain to a demonstration." I answer, if we take the actions of the unregenerate in the compound sense, including the manner and all the circumstances of their performances ; then it is true, they are not holy but sinful ; though the actions in themselves, or in the divided sense may be good. For an action must be conformable to the law in manner and circumstances, as well as in it's substance, otherwise it cannot be denominated holy. It may be conformable to the command in one respect, and not in another. In whatever respect it agrees with the command, it is good, and matter of duty ; though if in any respect it be essentially defective, there is no true holiness in it ; but taken as including such defects, it is on the whole sinful. One sin is enough to denominate a man a sinner in the eye of the law, though all his other actions are conformable to it. And one defect or irregularity in an action is enough to denominate it sinful in the eye of the law, though in all other respects conformable to it. But though all the actions of the unregenerate in the compound sense swerve from the rule of duty in some respects, so are to be accounted sinful ;
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yet some of their actions do not swerve from the rule in every respect, so are not all sin, or every way sinful, but are materially good. Now it does not imply commanding sin, to command the doing of that which is in itself good, though it should be certain that it will not be done in a holy manner. For in this case the sin does not lie in what is commanded, that is, in the substance of the performance, but wholly in the irregular manner and circumstances, which, though foreseen, are not commanded but forbidden.

To prove that all the doings of the unregenerate are sin, our author argues, that "In the exercises of a moral agent there can be no medium between holiness and sin." But he either mistakes the meaning of this maxim, and holds it in an untrue sense; or else it makes nothing to the purpose of his argument. It may be true that no actions of a moral agent in the compound sense, taking in all their adjuncts and circumstances, are of an indifferent nature, neither right nor wrong upon the whole: And it is true, that no actions of the unregenerate are upon the whole, in all respects, either good or indifferent. They are all sinful in their manner and circumstances. But an action materially good, may, according to the different manner and circumstances of it's performance, become sinful or holy in the compound sense; though no possible circumstances can make an action materially forbidden become an act of holiness. And there are numberless actions materially indifferent, that is not absolutely commanded or forbidden; which yet cannot be either done or forborn without such concomitant circumstances, as may render them on the whole, *pro hic & nunc*, either perfectly right, and so holy, or some way wrong and improper. Now an action right in some respects and wrong in others, is not holy in the eye of the law, which requires a rectitude in every respect; consequently

quently it is in the compound sense sinful : And yet being conformable to the law in some respect, for instance as to the matter of it, it has therefore something belonging to it which is (not indifferent but) good, and matter of duty ; which however does not contain all that goodness which is essential to true holiness. Of this nature are the best actions of the unregenerate. To require these in themselves, or in the divided sense, is not requiring sin ; for in this sense they are not sin : Nor is it requiring indifferent actions, which would be an absurd supposition ; for when required, they would be no longer indifferent but duty, whatever they were before. And however certain it may be that men will defile these duties by their manner of performing them, this is no part of what God requires of them, nor has it any tendency to their good.

I may further add, that since the best duties of believers are sinfully defective, it may as well be argued, that God commands sin, in requiring of them such duties as they are able to perform in this state of imperfection ; as that he commands sin if he prescribes an attendance on means previous to regeneration. It will be said, that so far as they obey the divine command, their actions are not sinful. True. But in one respect, that is in the strength or intenseness of their exercises, all they do comes far short of what is their duty. Must we then conclude, that if God prescribes evangelical obedience to christians as duty, and as the necessary means of salvation, then he prescribes the sinful imperfection as well as the obedience, since he knows that it will be imperfect ? I hope not. Nor is there any more necessity to conclude, that in prescribing an attendance on means to the unregenerate, the sinful defilements with which he knows their endeavours will be corrupted, must be also commanded. In short, Mr. H's argument is nothing but that sophistical

stical one, called by logicians, *Argumentatio a sensu composito ad sensum divisum*.

He endeavours however to vindicate it. Says he, "Take away the sin, and separate it from every thing else, and there remains nothing in which there is any moral agency, and so nothing in which there is either sin or duty, and therefore nothing which can be the subject of command: Consequently if the sin be not commanded, nothing is commanded." Ibid.

Ans. The word sin may be taken in two senses. 1. As signifying the whole compound action with all it's circumstances, which is in some respect irregular and wrong. But if this be the sense here intended, our author's assertion will be absurdly trifling, and nothing to his purpose; amounting only to this, take away the whole of the sinful action, and no action will remain. And we may as well say, take away the whole imperfect action of a believer, which as being imperfect is sinful, and nothing will remain wherein moral agency is exercised. 2. By the sin of an action is properly meant that in or belonging to it which is in itself forbidden, and which constitutes the compound action in that respect faulty, or inconformable to the law; whether the fault lies in the substance of the action, or in it's end, or it's other circumstances, or in all of them. Now if those actions which are supposed to be enjoined on the unregenerate were contrary to the divine command in every respect, then indeed it would be true, taking away the sin would remove them wholly; and if every thing in them were supposed contrary to the command, it would be absurd ever to make it a question whether any thing in them were commanded. But this we deny. Such actions as God has enjoined on the unregenerate are in themselves good; their sinfulness does not lie in the matter, but in the manner of the performance. And if it should

should be said that there is no moral agency exercised in the matter of the performance, this would be the same as to say that there is no morality in the substance of external duties ; which is demonstrably false. The morality of an action is nothing else but it's relation to the divine law commanding or forbidding it ; in other words, it's being commanded or forbidden by God. Now it has been proved, and is exceedingly evident from the scriptures, nor that I know of expressly denied by any, that the divine laws extend to the imperate or effective, as well as the immanent acts of the soul. They require a right behaviour, as well as right principles, and affections. Mens outward actions may be contrary to the law, when their designs are good. And their behaviour may be right, when their ends are not such as they ought to be. When men perform external duties from natural principles, the sinfulness lies in their not having and exercising holy principles, rather than in their exercising natural principles in such a manner of behaviour : It lies in not aiming at the end they ought, rather than in aiming at an end they ought not to respect. Consequently the sin adhering to such actions lies in omission, rather than commission. And it is so far from being true that to take away the sin is taking away the action, in the divided sense ; that if we take away the action materially good, and leave the same principles, ends, and other circumstances conjoined with the omission of it, the sin instead of being taken away or lessened, would be enhanced.

Mr. H. proceeds in the defence of his argument. " There is a natural connection between requiring the
 " unregenerate to pray, as such, and requiring them
 " to sin." Ibid. Answ. To require their unregeneracy, and sinful exercises in their prayers, as well as the prayers themselves, would indeed be requiring them

them to sin. These God does not require. But to require the prayers in themselves, notwithstanding the sin with which they will certainly be defiled, while men remain unregenerate, has no connection with the requirement of sin, as has been shewn. Besides, let our author consider, whether God's requiring christians to perform evangelical duties, though imperfect, has a natural connection with his requiring their imperfection, as well as the duties themselves? Whether his encouraging the unregenerate to use the means of conversion, implies or has a natural connection with an encouragement of the sinfulness, as well as the use of means? Whether when himself advises to the same, on supposition of a state of unregeneracy, he really means to advise to the sinfulness as well as to diligent endeavours? May we not hope that a due consideration of these things may yet lead him out of his mistake?

He adds, "If the prayers of the wicked are an abomination, i. e. wholly sinful, then to require them to make such prayers, is for God to require them to do what is an abomination to him, and wholly sinful. And this is the same, I think, as to require them to sin." P. 125. We may here return again the same answer as before. Prayers and other acts of religious obedience as performed by the unregenerate are, taking in all their circumstances, sinful; because in some respects inconformable to the rule of their duty. And to require such prayers, in the compound sense, would be requiring the irregular circumstances together with the substance of the performance. This God has not done. But the prayers and other religious actions of the unregenerate are sometimes materially and in themselves such as they ought to be; and also right in some of their circumstances. Consequently, they are not all sin, or in every respect contrary to the divine law. And to require them to

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make such prayers, and perform such actions, as are right and good for matter, and manner in some respects ; though it be certain that in other respects and circumstances they will be essentially faulty, is infinitely different from commanding them to sin, as has been often noted.

But he further pleads, " If it be mens immediate
" and indispensable duty to be holy and embrace the
" gospel, no reason can be given why this should not
" be required of them immediately." Answ. There is no reason why all this, and much more, even perfect obedience to the law, should not be required of men as their immediate duty. But he adds, " Or why
" any thing less or lower than this should be required
" at all." Ibid. Answ. The wisdom of God has seen fit to prescribe something less and lower than a perfect compliance with our whole duty, as the means of obtaining needed blessings. And we have good reason for what we do, when we speak as the oracles of God.

Something further is added to the same purpose ; but I have not observed any thing which may be thought to require particular notice, except what has been already spoken to somewhere in this essay.

Conclusion.

I Have now in some manner gone through my proposed undertaking. And upon the whole of our author's performance (so far as it has fallen under present examination) I must say, that it is not the "*metaphysical*," that is, as he explains it, the "close sound reasoning" * contained in it that has (in my opinion) troubled those dissenting from him on this point.
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* p. 63.

The words indeed are often hard, but the arguments are soft and yielding enough. His design was, I charitably hope, in the main good ; viz. to bring sinners off from a self-righteous trust in duties ; but he has carried the matter to such an extreme as, I think, will not abide the test of scripture and reason : And so it is to be feared has disserved, and raised prejudices against some important truths of the gospel, for which he would appear a zealous advocate. However the whole is referred to the candid consideration and impartial judgment of those who have their senses exercised to discern good and evil, and who are disposed to give every argument, or reason, it's just weight, how inconsiderable soever the person may be who urges it, or however defective his manner. Wishing that without favour or prejudice, truth may be embraced, and error rejected ; which is all that any one can reasonably desire who disputes in earnest, and in the integrity of his heart, and not from a mean ambition of worsting another in an argument. And may God in his infinite mercy pardon whatever is amiss either in the matter or manner of these our debates, preserve us from unchristian animosities, and uncharitable disaffections towards one another, unite christians more and more in judgment and heart, keep them from dangerous extremes, cause truth and holiness to prevail, to the abundant edification of the church, and the honour of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and our Savior Jesus Christ.

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